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[SCORNED AND DERIDED.]

ETHEL ARBUTHNOT;

OR,

WHO'S HER HUSBAND?

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Amy Robsart," "The Bondage of Brandon,"

"Breaking the Charm," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XI.

SIR BRANDON SHOWS HIMSELF A GENTLEMAN.

Things wear a visor which I think to like not.
TANNER OF TYBURN.

ON that particularly snowy and disagreeable night which saw Ethel dismissed from her employment, from which she derived but a scanty pittance, and yet how much to her then, a gentleman, wrapped in the comforting folds of a substantial ulster, sought the office of Mr. Clews, in Bedford Row.

It was only five o'clock. The streets, however, were thickly covered with the swiftly falling snow which blew in the faces of people in a sadly bewildering way, and it was with difficulty that horses could progress through the streets.

Entering the lawyer's office the gentleman shook the snow from his hat and coat, and exposed a stoutly-built frame, with a handsome though bronzed face, which seemed to indicate that he had travelled under a tropical sun.

"Is Mr. Clews in?" he demanded, in a haughty manner.

It was evident he had been accustomed to command.

"He is," replied the clerk, whom he had addressed; "but he is very particularly engaged, and cannot see anyone. You'd better call to-morrow."

The stranger frowned darkly.

"I must see him. Take in my card," he said.

"He won't see you. I've got strict orders."

"Which is his private room?"

The clerk indicated a door on the left, and the stranger at once strode towards it. Seeing that his intention was to intrude the clerk sprang from his office stool, and just as the gentleman put his hand on the knob of the door he grasped him by the arm.

"Didn't I tell you he was engaged?" he cried.

The stranger turned round, displaying his manly and muscular frame to advantage. Seizing the clerk by the nape of the neck he threw him, as a dog would a rat, on a heap of waste paper.

"That's how I treat people who dare to touch me, canaille!" he exclaimed.

The clerk rose to his feet and glared at his antagonist, and the other clerks seized their rulers as if they thought a general conflict was going to take place.

"What did you do that for?" he asked.

"Don't question me," replied the stranger.

"I have hanged many a better man than you for doing far less than you have. Stand back," he added, "if you don't want me to do you an injury."

He had raised his voice to a high pitch, and the tone in which he spoke, in addition to the noise made by the clerk's fall, roused Mr. Clews, who opened the door. Directly he saw the stalwart stranger he started.

"Sir Brandon Arbuthnot!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Clews, it is I," replied the baronet; "you did not expect me so soon; but I wish to talk to you immediately."

"Certainly, Sir Brandon; by all means."

The lawyer bowed politely, for Sir Brandon on his return home, after taking possession of his estates, had continued Clews in the position of the family lawyer, which was of considerable money value to him.

"I have to apologise for making a disturbance in your office," continued Sir Brandon. "The fact is my business will admit of no delay. Your clerk would not take my name into you; he tried to stop me from entering your private room, and I simply threw him to the other end of the room."

"Very sorry indeed," replied Mr. Clews. "I was writing my letters. Look over it this time, Sir Brandon. The young man did not know you. I apologise. It shall not occur again. Step inside, please."

"The apology shall come from me," said the baronet. "I have a very hot temper, and unfortunately my residence in India has not improved it."

He followed the lawyer into the room, and took a chair near a cosy fire which was burning in the grate.

"Anything wrong at the Hall, Sir Brandon?" asked Mr. Clews.

"Nothing."

"You found everything as I told you it would be?"

"Everything was perfectly satisfactory. Being an unmarried man I cannot stay there alone, and I have shut up the house, preferring to live at an hotel in London. I shall marry when I see anyone I like; until then I have friends in town with whom I prefer to spend my time."

"Quite right, Sir Brandon," answered Mr. Clews. "With your fortune you cannot be expected to live the life of a hermit. I commend you."

"Thank you," said the baronet.

There was a slight pause, during which the latter seemed to be making an effort to broach some subject which was not altogether agreeable to him.

"I am hot-tempered, but not vindictive," the baronet observed.

"I understand," replied Mr. Clews, wondering what he was aiming at.

"My passion is soon over," continued Sir Brandon. "By the way, give that young man I threw in the corner a five-pound note."

"With pleasure, Sir Brandon."

"It will solace his wounded feelings. Go at once, please."

The lawyer rose and said to himself:

"Why, it's more than a month's salary. There isn't one of them that wouldn't be thrown all round the place twice a day at that price; but he took the note and slipped it into his pocket."

When he reached the office he handed the clerk the money.

"From the baronet, Davis," he exclaimed. "You were hasty and in the wrong. It is always well to know a gentleman when you see him. Fine gentleman Sir Brandon—pays like a prince. Money no object."

"Thank you, sir," said the clerk. "I'm not hurt. You gave orders you weren't to see anyone, and—"

"Enough said," interrupted the lawyer.

"Never talk too much. Bad plan to talk. Go on with your work, and always recognise a gentleman in future, Davis, under whatever disguise you may meet him."

He returned to his client, and warmed his hands over the fire.

"Well?" ejaculated Sir Brandon Arbuthnot. "The young man is very grateful," said Mr. Clews. "It will be a lesson to him for life. Oh, yes, you acted very properly."

"Oh, no, I did not. It was bad form; but I cannot stand insolence from inferiors, and the fellow touched me. That, however, is not what I came here to talk about. I fear, Clews, that I have not acted rightly towards Miss Arbuthnot and her mother."

"All the proceedings strictly legal, Sir Brandon."

"I know that; bother your law. Of course, the estate is mine, and she had to give it up; that is not the question. I thought they were vulgar people. Hammersley tells me she is a perfect lady."

"Best girl that ever lived," said Mr. Clews, enthusiastically. "I don't care where the next comes from."

"She must have the proper feeling in her," continued the baronet. "Why she has given up everything—even her jewellery and dresses. By Jove! I didn't want that, you know."

"Even left her watch and chain and the balance at the bank, Sir Brandon."

"Yes. She has stripped herself of everything, and it occurred to me that she must be in want."

"No doubt of it."

"Have you heard from her lately?"

"A few weeks ago, Sir Brandon," said Mr. Clews. "She is too proud to make any complaint, and merely informed me that she had obtained a situation as shopgirl in a linen-draper's shop at the munificent salary of fifteen shillings a week."

"Good heaven! Is it possible! That would not keep body and soul together, even if she had not her mother to provide for, more espe-

cially as she has been accustomed to plenty of money and every luxury. Where is she?"

"At Morecambe. Her employers are Messrs. Sarsenet and Co."

"Look here, Clews," said Sir Brandon. "I want to allow these Arbuthnots, who are my relatives, three hundred pounds a year."

Mr. Clews looked profoundly astonished. He rose and took the baronet's hand, while the tears came into his eyes.

"Heaven will bless you for it, Sir Brandon!" he exclaimed. "You are a gentleman."

"I hope so. Now, if you have nothing better to do to-night, I want you to come down to Morecambe with me. We will find out Miss Ethel, and you can draw up the papers and settle everything at once."

"I'd go to the end of the world for that purpose, but—"

The lawyer paused abruptly and shook his head gravely.

"What?" interrogated Sir Brandon.

"It's my opinion she won't take a halfpenny from you."

"Well, that's her look out. I will make the offer, and then my conscience will be clear. Let us get into a cab and be off."

Mr. Clews put on his overcoat and hat. He was a single man, having no family ties, he only had to tell one of his clerks to send a telegram to his housekeeper and he was ready. They caught a train at the station, which in three hours landed them at the Morecambe terminus, from which they inquired the way to the linen-draper's establishment of Sarsenet and Co.

The snow was falling in Morecambe as fast as it descended in London, and the large, dismal-looking manufacturing town looked more gloomy and funereal than ever. Even the white mantle which lay upon housetop and on doorstep did not relieve the sombre monotony of its streets. The cashier of Sarsenet and Co. had just finished paying off the hands, for it was the eventful Saturday which had seen Ethel discharged from her employment. Mr. Samms was standing in the doorway watching the snow.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Clews, "but have you a young—ahem!—person in your employ named Arbuthnot?"

"No," replied Mr. Samms.

"Are you sure?"

"Quite!" said the manager, adding, "Stay! I know that name. You must mean a girl who calls herself Harrison. Rather an uppish piece of goods!"

"A young lady, sir, every inch of her, if you please!" replied the lawyer.

Sir Brandon compressed his fists, as if he would have liked to knock Mr. Samms down, but he restrained himself.

"Well," continued Samms, "if that's the party she's gone!"

"Gone! Where?"

"How can I tell? We discharged her to-day and we don't trouble ourselves enough about our employes to keep their addresses. They come and go. This one was saucy, and I had to start her."

Sir Brandon looked annoyed.

"Is there no possibility of discovering her whereabouts?" he asked.

"Not that I know of," answered Mr. Samms. "You see there are forty thousand factory hands and shopgirls in this town, and it's like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay."

Sir Brandon took Mr. Clews' arm and they walked away.

"I am sorry," he said, sadly. "We will go to an hotel now. It is useless to do anything more on this terrible night. We will try again to-morrow."

"Yes, to-morrow," said Mr. Clews, hopefully.

They proceeded to the nearest hotel, little thinking that Ethel, homeless and friendless, was lying insensible in the snow. But to-morrow came and days succeeded without their being able to find any trace of the missing girl. She had vanished completely, and though the police aided them in their exertions, they were at fault. At length they abandoned the hope-

less task in despair and returned to London. As they parted, Sir Brandon exclaimed:

"I take you to witness, Clews, that I have done all that a man can do in this matter."

"All?" replied the lawyer. "It does you credit, Sir Brandon."

"Poor girl! I wish she had not so much pride, but it runs in the family, Clews."

"Yes, Sir Brandon. It's a proud family."

"If you should hear from her again, let me know?"

"At once!"

They shook hands and parted. Thus ended, for the time, Sir Brandon's efforts to improve the condition of his distressed relative.

CHAPTER XII.

"HELP!"

Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are crushed, for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue. BACON.

It happened that Mr. Thomas Woodruffe had driven over to Morecambe on Saturday to dine with his friend Harry Hargraves, the son of a prominent doctor in the town. They had indulged freely in champagne, and neither of them were as steady on their legs as they might have been.

The snow warned him that if he would reach home in safety he ought to start early, so he tore himself away from the cosy fire and the inspiring wine, his friend walking with him as far as the stable where he had put up his horse. Lady Woodruffe's house was only a few miles from the town of Morecambe, and with an ordinarily good road, he knew he could reach home in an hour. As they were going along Tom stumbled over something in the road.

"Hold up, old boy," said Hargraves. "Easy! Steady!"

Tom looked down to see what it was which had caused him to slip, and saw a body in the snow.

"By Jove, Harry!" he exclaimed, "here's some poor, half-starved or drunken person in the roadway."

"Drunk," replied Harry. "It's Saturday night, and they all do it. Pay a poor man his wages and he's bound to go to the nearest public."

"But it's a woman."

"Eh! by George, so it is. That's bad. I wonder she isn't frozen to death."

"Perhaps she is."

Saying this, Tom Woodruffe stooped down, and taking the body in his arms, carried it to the nearest lamp-post. A glance at the poor, pale face enabled him to see who it was that he had so strangely rescued.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "How singular! This is a friend of mine, Miss Ethel Arbuthnot. I cannot understand it. Help me to carry her to the hotel, Harry. She is as cold as ice."

Hastily they conveyed the inanimate girl to the hostelry at which they had been dining, and placing her on a sofa, Mr. Hargraves examined her. He fortunately belonged to that highly interesting section of humanity known as medical students, and was thoroughly competent to treat her case.

A small bruise on the forehead, accompanied by a slight abrasion of the skin, accounted for the insensible condition in which she was found, for she had struck her head against the steps in falling when the brutal landlady had pushed her from the house.

Though chilled at the extremities her body retained its vital heat, and her heart beat regularly, though somewhat feebly. Restoratives were applied, and Tom Woodruffe awaited the result with anxiety.

"Is she all right? Will she come to?" he kept inquiring.

"Certainly," replied Hargraves; "it's only a question of time. What are your relations with this young lady?"

"That of friendship only," answered Tom. "I was more than half inclined to get spoony

on her once, but she snubbed me so decidedly that I had to abandon the idea in despair. I can tell you she's rather a festive kind of filly, and will kick clean over the traces if you don't drive her with a martingale."

"She is wonderfully pretty," mused Hargraves. "What do you say her name is?"

"Arbuthnot. The history of her mother and herself is quite a romance. They occupied Oak Hall, thinking it was their own, until Sir Brandon turned up, and they had to quit at short notice."

"Curiously enough," continued Hargraves, "we had an old lady admitted to the hospital this morning who kept on raving about being an Arbuthnot and the indignity she was subjected to."

"Very likely this girl's mother. Perhaps their misfortunes have turned her brain," said Tom.

"More improbable things than that have happened," said Hargraves. "Hush! She opens her eyes. Give me the brandy. So; that will do. She'll be all right in five minutes."

Tom hastily retreated, as he had been holding Ethel's silky hair in his hand and passing it admiringly through his fingers. In a short time Ethel sat up on the sofa, and while an expression of pain crossed her features, she uttered a cry of anguish. The blood was circulating once more in the extremities, which was what caused her to suffer so acutely.

"Oh! where am I, and what are you doing to me?" she asked.

"My dear young lady," answered Hargraves, "I am a doctor. You were picked up in the snow, and we have just brought you to."

"I recollect now," Ethel exclaimed, passing her hand over her face sadly. "The snow was falling when she bit me. Thank you for your kindness, sir. Am I strong enough to go now?"

"That depends upon how far you have to go. Do you live near where we found you?"

The sad expression on her pale face deepened. "I have no home, no friends, no money," she exclaimed, clasping her hands together. "I must ask the way to the workhouse, sir. They take in poor, friendless girls on a night like this, do they not?"

She had not hitherto perceived Tom Woodruffe, as the conversation had been carried on between Hargraves and herself; but before the latter could reply Tom advanced from the partial obscurity in which he had been standing.

"By Jove!" he cried, "I cannot stand this. If you are in such a deplorable condition as you state, Miss Arbuthnot, let me help you."

Ethel started and was profoundly humiliated.

"Oh! Mr. Woodruffe," she said, "I did not think you were here. It is dreadful for one's poverty to be known, but since it is I will conceal nothing. I was discharged from my employment in a linen-draper's to-day. My mother was sent to the hospital. I fear her mind is affected, for she still fancies herself at Oak Hall, but she is not at all dangerous, and I could take care of her. To-night I was refused admission to my lodgings, and cruelly assailed by my landlady. I know no more."

"It was I who found you in the snow," replied Tom.

"I helped to carry you here," said Hargraves, as if he did not wish Tom to have all the honour.

"I cannot thank you sufficiently, gentlemen," answered Ethel. "Let me beg one favour of you. Do not mention this affair anywhere. I shall not stay in the workhouse longer than I can help, for I will look for employment again when the weather is finer, and as soon as I can I will take poor mamma out of the hospital, where the unkind landlady sent her."

Tom gazed at her with admiration. Surely this girl was an angel. Not one word of reproach passed her lips. She did not murmur against Providence for the harshness of her lot. All was the purest resignation of Christian charity; all she asked for was the rough shelter and the rude support that the guardians give

the houseless and starving poor to keep body and soul together. Never had he heard of such single-mindedness, such enduring fortitude under trouble, and such a sweet disposition.

"I'll be hanged—pardon me, I mean you shan't go to any workhouse as long as Tom Woodruffe can stop it!" he exclaimed.

"But I must," she replied.

"There is my house," exclaimed Hargraves, "mother will be delighted to receive you, Miss Arbuthnot."

"No," said Tom, jealous of any interference; "I've known her longer than you, Harry, and she knows my mother, so I think I'll drive her home. She'll be all right if we wrap her up, won't she?"

"Oh, yes; no danger now," replied Hargraves. "I'll answer for that."

It was in vain that Ethel protested against this arrangement. She explained how Lady Woodruffe had insulted her the last time they met, and said she feared she would only make dissension in the family.

Tom would have his own way. He ordered a close carriage, which would be nice and warm and comfortable in preference to driving his own horse home. At last Ethel consented, for she felt very weak and ill, having had nothing to eat that evening, though she was much too proud to say so.

When the carriage was ready, the two young men wrapped her up carefully, and she was driven off towards Lady Woodruffe's, Mr. Hargraves promising to ride over in the morning and prescribe for her if she should require his professional services, which he hoped she would not. During the drive Tom told Ethel that he had a little fishing cottage on the banks of a meandering stream which was unlet, and he would allow her mother and herself to live there rent free.

"But we have nothing to live upon, dear Mr. Woodruffe," replied Ethel. "You see that I must reside in some large town in order to gain a subsistence."

"You are well educated, and must be a good accountant," answered Tom, who was fertile in resources. "Now I pay a pig-headed steward a hundred a year to keep my accounts. Will you do it for the same sum?"

Ethel considered a moment and thought she could, so it was arranged that she and her mother should reside at Brook Cottage on the terms agreed on. It was quite late when they arrived at the house, but lights in the drawing-room indicated that Lady Woodruffe was sitting up for her son. Tom assisted Ethel out of the carriage, and together they entered the room.

"Ah! you are back at last," said her ladyship. "How late you are!" Then her eyes fell on Ethel, and she added: "Who is this young person?"

"One whom you know, mother," replied Tom, "Miss Arbuthnot. She has met with reverses and fallen on hard times. Knocked quite out of the betting, you know, and can't show up at the post, and all that sort of thing."

Lady Woodruffe regarded Ethel coldly, and with a severe stare.

"Divested of your horsey slang," she exclaimed, "I suppose your speech is intended to convey to me the fact that Miss Arbuthnot is in a state of destitution."

"Precisely, only I put it mildly, you know."

"Is this house a refuge for the destitute?"

"Well, not exactly," he replied, in some confusion.

Ethel stood still trembling. She wished she had not come. The workhouse, with all its horrors, would have been preferable to her ladyship's sneers. She felt so weak and broken-spirited that she could say nothing.

"I should hope not!" continued Lady Woodruffe. "But I am not uncharitable, and as the young woman appears to be in want of assistance, I will give her a sovereign. Let her return at once. I can do nothing for her here, as my list of domestic servants is complete, and, besides, I never engage any female without a character."

The hot blood rushed to Ethel's face at this

insult, and she drew her breath in quick, short gasps.

"Servant! Character! Mother!" said Tom, "do you forget that you are a lady talking to a lady?"

"A pretty sort of lady," sneered her ladyship. "I will ring the bell and have her taken to the place she came from. This is not the time for people to come begging!"

She laid her hand upon the bell-rope, but Tom's blood was up now, and he almost forgot that the cruelly insolent aristocrat before him was his mother.

"By heaven!" he exclaimed, "if anyone leaves the house it shall be you!"

Lady Woodruffe had never seen him so angry, yet she would not give way.

"You seem strangely interested in this creature," she said.

"This creature, as you call her!" cried Tom, raising his voice angrily, "is a lady. I am master in this house, and if you say another word to her or against her, I will shut it up, make you an allowance, and never see you again!"

"Tom," replied her ladyship, alarmed at this threat, "do you forget that I am your mother?"

"I wish I could!"

"Bad boy! What infatuation is this? Well, you shall be humoured. I always spoil you, and this is the reward I get for it. Miss Arbuthnot shall sleep under this roof to-night."

"I should think she will, or I'll know the reason why!"

"Perhaps you are right and I was hasty. It is late for her to go."

"Look at the night," said Tom, a little mollified. "It isn't fit to turn a dog out!"

Lady Woodruffe turned to Ethel, who was standing like a statue with her hands clasped, and an expression of hopeless agony on her countenance.

"Come with me, miss," continued her ladyship; "I will show you to your room, if you will condescend to follow me, since it is my son's whim."

Ethel took one step forward, then a deep sigh broke from her, and she fell forward in a dead faint! The scene had been too much for her overwrought nerves. Fortunately Tom caught her in his hastily outstretched arms, and bore her to the lounge, uttering words of comfort not unmingled with indignant remarks on the inhumanity of his mother.

"This is embarrassing," said her ladyship, biting her lips; "but common people always make a scene. I believe they do it on purpose!"

CHAPTER XIII.

FACE TO FACE.

Revenge is now the end
That I do chew. I'll challenge him.

WE are at St. Ambrose-on-Sea again. The pleasant watering-place has put on its winter garb, and its theatres, assembly rooms, and summer resorts are closed. No German bands perambulate the town, making sweet discord. The organs have departed, and the negro minstrels have shaken the dust off their feet and gone to foreign parts; the hotels are languishing; the lodging-house keepers are living on their earnings, and the place seems dead.

A gentleman, however, arrives at the principal hotel, and registers himself as Mr. Henry Carter Gordon. He is on his way to Paris, for a service of boats run between St. Ambrose and Havre, which is the route he means to take. Unfortunately for him the sea is very rough, a heavy gale is blowing on to the English coast, and there being no passengers and no mails, the boat does not start. A notice to that effect is posted in the hotel, and Mr. Henry Carter Gordon remains unwillingly a prisoner at St. Ambrose.

He likes the sea when it is rough, and goes for a walk on the parade. Rain is falling and

the stormy wind dashes it in his face. He strolls on the pier, and the foam-crested waves wet him through, so he descends the steps and walks on the sands.

It is about noon, and scarcely has he left his hotel than another gentleman arrives. This time it is Mr. Charles Palethorpe, who looks worn and travel stained. He shows a photograph to the clerk, as if he was a detective after a criminal, and asks if he has seen anyone resembling it.

"Gentleman staying here, sir," replied the clerk—"Mr. Henry Carter Gordon."

"A false name! but no matter," said Palethorpe. "Where is he?"

"Gone for a walk."

"Good, I will follow him."

Pulling his hat over his brow, Charles Palethorpe, looking as stern and relentless as fate, goes forth into the storm. He too likes the tempest, for it harmonises with his feelings. He has been on the trail of Herbert Layton for some weeks, as we know, and at last he thinks he has found him.

They met in London. He saw him come out of a photographer's, but he was lost in the crowd, and all Charles could do was to buy a photograph, as he rightly conjectured that he had been to have his picture taken. Then he saw him again at a railway station, but while he ran to buy a ticket the train went off, but he followed in the next.

This is how it came to pass that Charles Palethorpe followed Mr. Gordon to St. Ambrose-on-Sea, always taking him to be Herbert Layton. So this marvellous resemblance between the two men was about to cause new complications.

Charles Palethorpe had not left the hotel more than five minutes when a third guest arrived, making inquiries as to the next London train. He had come from Havre, the boat venturing across in spite of the storm, as the wind was in her favour.

"No train till five o'clock, sir," replied the clerk; "but I thought you were going to France—have you changed your mind?"

"I have never spoken to you before," said the stranger, who, however, turned a shade paler.

"I beg your pardon, sir. You are Mr. Gordon?"

"No; you make a mistake; we are very much alike. Is Mr. Gordon here?"

"Yes, sir."

"I should like to see him, if I could meet him accidentally."

"You'll find him on the parade or on the sands, sir," answered the clerk. "He said he was going for a walk. What name, if you please, sir?"

"It does not matter. Take care of my valise," was the reply.

Leaving his travelling bag, the third gentleman also quitted the hotel, and braved the vagaries of the storm. By this time Charles Palethorpe was out of sight. He had gone to the end of the marine parade without encountering Mr. Gordon, and seeing a figure promenading on the sands he followed it. A brisk walk of a quarter of an hour brought him up with the figure.

"Sir!" he exclaimed, tapping him on the shoulder.

Mr. Gordon, for it was he, turned round abruptly.

"Who the deuce are you?" he cried, "and how dare you touch me? I do not permit such familiarity, even with my friends, to say nothing about cads whom I do not know."

The young man smiled.

"You knew my father," he said.

"What was his name?"

"Palethorpe."

Charles looked at him steadily, expecting to see him wince; but he did nothing of the sort.

"Placing his glass in his eye, Mr. Gordon regarded him as if he were an escaped lunatic.

"For whom do you take me?" he inquired.

"For Herbert Layton, the man who murdered my father at this very town," said Charles.

"I thought so," answered Mr. Gordon. "I

am sorry to undeceive you, my good sir, but you are mistaken."

"Impossible!"

"I am Mr. Gordon. Mr. Layton is like me. Now go away, please, and don't bother me any more."

He turned contemptuously on his heel.

"How many more times am I to be troubled with this unfortunate resemblance?" he muttered.

Charles again touched him, this time more roughly than before, for he seized his arm rudely.

"This subterfuge shall not avail you," he cried.

"Idiot! stand back!" exclaimed Mr. Gordon, wrenching his arm free.

"I will not."

"Then I shall do you an injury."

Mr. Gordon aimed a blow at him, which struck Charles in the face. He fell back, staggering, while the blood gushed from his mouth. In a moment he recovered himself, and with a spring like that of a tiger, and the cry of a wild beast, he presented himself within a few paces of his antagonist.

"Villain! coward! murderer!" he roared, in a hoarse voice, which rose above the sound of the waves and the storm, "you shall not escape me!"

At the same instant he drew two pistols from his pocket.

"Take one, and defend yourself," he added, "or by the heaven above, I will shoot you down like a dog."

Mr. Gordon paled perceptibly, and gazed at him like one in a dream.

(To be Continued.)

THE TRUEST AND BEST.

I HAD two friends in my early youth
Ere falsehood had shadow'd my young
heart's truth

And the world seem'd bright and golden.
The one was fair, with a sunny smile,
And a tongue that would many an hour beguile,
As read of in legends olden.

The other was dark, with a calm, proud
look,
And a face you might read as an open
book,

Hating the laws that the poor oppressed,
And I oftentimes thought in our boyhood's
time

If ever we reached our manhood's prime
Which would be truest and the best.

But I found when we breasted life's daily
strife

My fair young friend, once so gay and
blithe,

Soon with troubles and cares oppressed.
And the one I thought so stern and proud
Had brush'd in the world from his brow
the cloud,

And to all was the truest and the best.
O. P.

SCIENCE.

THE ORIGIN OF OUR DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

PALEOLITHIC man, who existed for so long a period in Western Europe during the quarter-anth age, was probably autochthonous. But at the commencement of the neolithic age a new civilisation was suddenly introduced, and a new type of man appears on the scene. Neolithic man, with his polished stone implements, brings with him a number of domestic animals—the dog, the goat, the sheep, the ox, the horse and the pig. By studying the origin of these

animals, and determining their ancestral home, light may obviously be thrown upon the source whence the neoliths migrated. Such a study has been undertaken by Professor Gabriel de Mortillet, who has contributed an interesting paper on this subject to the current number of *M. Cartailhac's Matériaux pour l'Histoire de l'Homme*. Neolithic man, according to Mortillet, came from Asia Minor, from Armenia, and the Caucasus. These, in fact, are said to be the only countries which could have yielded the assemblage of domestic animals and cereals which the neoliths brought with them upon their invasion of South-Western Europe during the Robenhausen period.

A NEW INVENTION IN STREET LIGHTING.

MR. B. KITT, the gas engineer to the Bristol Sanitary Authority, has hit upon a device by which the lighting power of public lamps can be greatly increased without augmenting their consumption of gas. Mr. Kitt's plan is to substitute for the present single burner a couple of burners, each consuming only half the quantity of gas per hour, and to suspend between these two small flames a convex lens, which acts as a powerful reflector. The plan has been submitted to a practical test and found to answer perfectly, the reflector causing each tiny gas jet to appear in the distance like a globe of strong light.

LAWS OF ATMOSPHERIC ELECTRICITY.

ATMOSPHERIC electricity presents daily in Piedmont two maxima following the rising and setting of the sun, at an interval of some hours. These two maxima are separated by a minimum which follows the passage of the sun over the meridian of the place. As regards the annual fluctuation the maximum value of the atmospheric tension falls in February, and the minimum in September. Before and after storms the electrometer almost always marks zero, but during their passage or proximity the tension is very great. Rain and snow increase tension more slightly, and are often preceded and followed by electric diminution. The action of fogs, hoar frosts, and of the formation of clouds increases atmospheric electricity, though to a less extent than that of rain and snow. In calm and hot weather the lowest values are observed. South and especially southeasterly winds increase the electricity of the air; north winds have an opposite effect. Rain and snow are accompanied by negative electricity, at least as often as by positive. The same proportion holds good for storms and to a less extent for rain and snow. Negative electricity is generally due to storms or rain at a distance, to the formation of clouds, or to a polar aurora. In the normal conditions of the atmosphere electric tension decreases with altitude.

SOMEONE has discovered that it is the intention of our Government to keep Cetewayo a prisoner on the Island of St. Helena. Why not in one of the Scilly Islands, where his Zulu Radical friends could occasionally visit him.

A RICH man has recently built a house at Brighton, which is most splendid outside, but extremely inconvenient within. An old friend of the lucky speculator advised him to take the house opposite, so that he might enjoy the prospect.

THE death is announced of Mr. Bonnett, an eccentric individual, who, together with his sister, was well known to Londoners. Miss Bonnett is a second Miss Flite, who spends her life in the Law Courts, waiting for her case to come on, and in offices where records are kept, searching for a title to some imaginary estates. She is amiable enough to all except the ushers of the Courts, her natural enemies, who persistently keep her out of her rights by preventing her addressing the judges at "four o'clock."



[THE RETURN OF THE WANDERER.]

THE COST OF CORA'S LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl,"

"Poor Loo," "Bound to the Trawl,"

"Fringed with Fire," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DRIFTING.

And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me.

SPONSONS had been discharged from custody, and no action had been taken against Latimer.

"The evidence is not strong enough to warrant his arrest," Mr. Graham had urged. "No one has seen him with the cane or can prove that he ever knew that it was in his room; indeed, the more probable inference is that had he known it he would never have been careless enough to leave it there."

"And to arrest him and accuse him of the crime would be to bring disgrace upon our own family," mused Lady Bellinda, meditatively.

"While it would look like personal animosity on your ladyship's part to bring this charge against your own kinsman, unless you possessed undoubted evidence of his guilt. You will forgive me I know for telling you that your dislike to him is already pretty generally known and commented upon."

"What is that to me?" with a flash of her grey eyes; "am I a woman to be influenced by what other people say or think of me? But I will yield to your judgment in this matter. If you think there is a doubt in Mr. Latimer's

favour pray let him have all the benefit of it," in a disdainful tone.

"I think there is scarcely a doubt against him," with a smile; "he gave his evidence frankly enough. The cane might have been found in my house without my knowing it was there, and you must admit it would be hard upon me to be suspected of the crime in consequence. Besides, remember we can put our hands upon Mr. Latimer at any moment if we want him, for I don't suppose he will be foolish enough to run away."

"Oh, no," with a bitter sneer, "he has no intention of quitting the castle."

Then her ladyship left the court and entered her carriage, passing Sponsons at the entrance. The man touched his hat to her, but she took no notice of the salute. She would like to have questioned him about many things concerning his objectionable master, but pride and dignity restrained her, and she swept on, stiff and upright, to her carriage, into which the polite lawyer assisted her. Sponsons' face flushed, he had paused to let her ladyship and the lawyer pass him, and he was just moving on again when a voice that seemed somewhat familiar said to him:

"You've had a narrow shave this time."

He started and looked round to see the Bow Street officer at his side.

"Ah! It is you," he said, in a tone of relief.

"I ought to thank you for the way in which you spoke for me to-day: is it of any use to ask you to take a glass with me?"

"No, it isn't, and I only did my duty and spoke the truth as far as I know it. But look here, young man, I feel a sort of interest in you, though why I can't say, and though advice is cheap 'tis a thing I don't often give away, so you may value it all the more if I spare a little for you. If I was you I'd make a fresh start in life in a new country. You've had two near shaves, you mayn't be quite so lucky a third time, and if you once become a gaoled bird, ten chances to one that you'll go from bad to worse, till you'll be past reformation. You was born for

something better than that, you know. You've got some money, though where you got it is best known to yourself; if it's come by honestly, take my advice and cut as soon as you can. We've not heard the last of this business at the castle; your master's a trifle too clever not to burn his fingers at last. But I've done, 'tis about the first time in my life that I've volunteered advice, and I'm not sure that it won't be the last."

He was turning away without another word when Sponsons exclaimed, impulsively:

"Don't say that. Some other poor fellow may one day want advice as much as I do. And it shan't be thrown away in my case, I promise you, for if I am living I will leave England before another week has passed."

"All right, old man, make it three days if you can, 'tis no use hesitating when you're going to take a jump. Good luck to you."

Then he turned away, leaving Sponsons to continue his course through the small town, where everybody turned round or ran out of their doors to look at him. He heeded them but little, however, his mind was filled with new thoughts, new hopes, new aspirations.

In a moment it seemed as though the possibility of a new life was opened up before him. The hundred pounds he had received from Latimer was still intact, besides this he possessed sufficient to pay his passage, third class, to New Zealand, and thither he determined to proceed without delay.

"I must get my things from the castle," he thought, and—

His reflections were cut short by finding himself brought to a standstill by a tall man who stood in his path. He glanced up and to his astonishment recognised Mr. Graham, Lady Bellinda's solicitor.

"Well, Mr. Sponsons, what are you going to do with yourself?" asked the lawyer.

Sponsons pulled himself up with something like dignity, as he said:

"I don't know what interest you can have in my movements, sir."

"Probably not," with genial good temper, "and personally I can't say that I have much. But after what has transpired to-day you can easily understand that Lady Bellinda would strongly object to your presence in the castle."

"I understand; my only reason for returning to Lamorna was to get my luggage; if you will engage that I shall receive it to-night, I will wait in this town for it."

"To-night?" repeated the lawyer, doubtfully. "It is two o'clock now, and the distance is fifteen miles each way."

Sponsons shrugged his shoulders as he said: "I must go to London to-night and I mean to leave England by the first ship in which I can get a passage to the opposite side of the world. If you won't send for my trunks I shall fetch them myself. You seem to forget that I am no longer a prisoner, and that I was acquitted of the charge brought against me."

"Indeed I do not, and if you will allow me to say so, I'm heartily glad you have cleared yourself. Your luggage shall be sent for, but by the way, does Mr. Latimer know of your intention to quit the country?"

"No, he has not taken the trouble to seek me since the day following the one on which I was arrested; I shall not seek him. But I am not running away from justice; if I were I should not tell you that I was going."

"I quite understand that. Let us walk back to the hotel where I am staying and I will send a man off to Lamorna Castle with a note for your luggage. You had better make an inventory so that nothing is forgotten; while we are waiting for his return perhaps you will dine with me?"

But this last invitation Sponsons declined. His impression was that the lawyer thought he was bestowing a great mark of condescension upon him in asking him to dinner, while he himself remembered that not so very many years ago the condescension would have been on the other side.

He wanted to be alone, he said, and this was true. The peril he had escaped, the new resolution that had sprung into life at the suggestion of the man whose evidence had saved him, produced a new current of thought and of feeling, and now so many things crowded into his mind that he needed solitude to be able to arrange his ideas.

It was strange that despite all the more personal things that demanded his attention, he should feel troubled about the plot which he had helped to perfect against Cora's welfare and happiness. Mrs. Robson's persistent refusal to leave the neighbourhood of the castle held out a prospect of further danger both to Cora and Latimer, and in the new life of honesty and uprightness that he had marked out for himself, Sponsons would have liked to undo all that was likely to produce evil in the present or the future to wipe out the past and start afresh with comparatively clean hands.

But though he felt irritated with Latimer, and was smarting under the conviction that he had been deserted by him, for it must be remembered that he was ignorant of Latimer's conscious guilt and peril, and though he was sorry for Cora, who had never done him any unkindness or wrong, he had no idea of betraying the former for the benefit of the latter.

"I was paid for the work, and I've got the money for it," he mentally argued; "without this money I couldn't go abroad now. 'Twas a piece of dirty work, it is true, and if I could afford to give him back his money, I should feel free to upset his plans, but I can't take a man's wages and betray him at the same time. That wouldn't be a good beginning for a new career, and after all, Latimer did help me when nobody else would: so far as holding my tongue goes, I'll be true to him."

It was in consequence of this resolution that, when some hours later Mr. Graham came to the private room which Sponsons had engaged till the arrival of his luggage, and tried to discover what he knew of Latimer, he politely but firmly refused to answer the lawyer's questions.

"You heard what was said in court about our knowledge of each other," he said. "Mr.

Latimer has on many occasions been very kind to me; we have not quarrelled, and I have nothing to say against him."

So they parted, and from this point Sponsons passes out of our history. He went to New Zealand, became rich and respected, but he and Lance Latimer never met again.

Meanwhile Latimer had himself returned to the castle, and was somewhat impatiently awaiting the return of his body servant. He had not spoken to him on leaving the court for many reasons; he was conscious also that it would be unwise, if not impossible, to retain the man any longer in his service at the castle, but he still intended to make use of him, and he did not for a moment anticipate that Lady Bellinda would prohibit his return.

"Whatever she suspects she can prove nothing!" was his mental comment; "but she will have me watched day and night, I don't doubt."

By this time the clock was striking ten. Sponsons had not appeared, and Latimer's patience being exhausted and his anxiety growing greater every moment, he rang the bell and asked the man who answered it if Sponsons had not returned.

"No, sir, his boxes were sent for, and they've been gone these five hours."

"Who fetched them?"

"A man from the Crown Hotel in Wreydonford. Mr. Graham, the lawyer, sent for them."

"That will do."

Then the wretched man was left alone.

"Had Sponsons sold him to his enemies?"

That was now the question that pressed upon his mind, that drove sleep from his eyelids, and that made him anxious and desperate enough to take to the mad resource of flight. Once in the night he rose from his sleepless couch with the thought of making good his escape before daylight. Then, recollecting himself, he laughed aloud and threw himself back on the bed he had just vacated.

"As though I could escape," he muttered, bitterly. "As though, at the first sign of fear, they would not fall upon me like a pack of wolves and tear me to pieces. No, I must stay and fight it out, happen what will."

With which conclusion he resigned himself to fate, and soon fell asleep.

Two months passed away, bringing but few perceptible changes to the inmates of Lamorna Castle. Very slowly the marquis grew stronger and better in health, though the cloud still hung over his mind, and the great surgeons when they came from London to see him began to speak hopefully of a successful operation that should remove the fractured part of the skull that was pressing upon the brain and restore to the sufferer the use of his mental faculties.

By Lady Bellinda's express desire, however, these hopes were not generally spoken of, and besides the nurses, Cora and herself, only Mr. Cadbury knew the real state of the case. Latimer in particular was kept in complete ignorance of the condition of his kinsman and victim.

Since that day when the marquis had shrunk in such terror from the young man, Lady Bellinda had watched over her brother with never ceasing vigilance, and so strictly did she guard him, that from that hour Latimer had never seen his face.

Even when Lord Lamorna was taken for a drive or wheeled about the gardens in a bath chair, and, as the days grew longer and warmer, sat by the open windows staring vacantly out at the sunlight, his sister, or Cora, or the rector, were always with him, and every servant had orders that Mr. Latimer was not to be admitted into certain rooms in the house.

It is true, that every morning the miscreant went through the ceremony of making inquiries about his victim, and of sending a polite message to Lady Bellinda, but the reply to his questions never varied: "his lordship was just the same," and so the days and weeks and months rolled on.

Since Sponsons had so abruptly left him with-

out even a message or a letter ascribing any reason for doing so Latimer had been utterly isolated at the castle. More than one servant had he tried to bribe or cajole to work in his interests, but with a singular want of success.

First of all, not one of the servants liked him, and next and more potent reason still, none of them believed in his ultimate success in the game he was playing by so persistently remaining at the castle when his presence was unwelcome to the mistress of it.

"He'll be Lord de Wreydon, but he'll never touch a penny of the property, if her ladyship can help it," the older servants had decided among themselves, and the underlings were ready enough to take their cue from them.

So that few persons knew less of what was going on under the roof that covered him, than did the man who still hoped to be the future possessor of that lordly mansion. But though the lives of Cora and Lady Bellinda passed calmly and smoothly enough within the castle, evil machinations were active enough outside the building, and the horizon was dark with a great cloud of coming trouble.

Lady Beverley and Lance Latimer had between them set a stone rolling that had long since passed out of their control, and they now watched it with helpless anxiety and alarm. Mrs. Robson, the woman who had been bribed to come forward and claim Cora as her daughter, was by no means wanting in that low species of cunning that is always ready to turn the misfortunes of other people to its own advantage.

Vain, dissipated and addicted to drunkenness as she was, she was still keen and shrewd enough to see that by a wonderful stroke of luck she had got into a position from which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to oust her.

Terror on recognising Fleming Cadbury, who had once seen her in prison, had for the moment made her ready to abandon her purpose and fly, but unluckily, he would not let her act on that first impulse, and a few minutes' reflection had convinced her that the fact of her having been in prison furnished her with another stone to cast at the pride of Cora and Cora's friends. It would be an additional inducement to them to buy her off at her own price, while it could not in any way weaken her position. So she had remained.

After Sponsons had gone away without a word of adieu or instruction to her, Mrs. Robson began to feel that she was mistress of the situation. Mr. Cadbury's admission, that if she proved her case she would certainly be provided for for life, or as she expressed it to herself, "bought off," made her look upon this conspiracy, in which she was playing the best paid part, as a far more promising and permanent piece of good fortune than she had at first imagined.

True, there were the chances of failure, and failure probably meant punishment, but unless Cora's real parents came forward and disproved her story it would not be an easy one to refute. She wished now that she had been more careful in her answers to the rector, particularly in regard to such trifles as the death of her mother, but, though she might be detected in one falsehood and another, the main part of her story would bear investigation: she had given birth to a female child at the date stated, that child had disappeared, and she had always said she had lost it, and these two facts, with the information Sponsons had obtained from Nurse Barlow and given to her, were enough for her purpose, she was sure.

That she did not really want possession of Cora goes without saying. She only wanted to extort as large a sum of money as she could persuade the Lysters was necessary to induce her to forego her claim to the girl; but, from this very motive she made a point of noisily and perpetually asserting that she had no desire for anything but her "cheild."

Detectives had been busily employed in hunting up the antecedents of this woman, and in getting evidence to confirm or refute her story; but such inquiries necessarily take time, and all

that had hitherto been discovered failed to show that her claim was unfounded.

Mr. Graham, the family lawyer, had sought more than one interview with her, but had utterly failed, either by threats or by persuasion, to silence her, or induce her to agree to anything like reasonable terms.

He had been prepared, against his own judgment and advice, but by Lady Bellinda's express orders, to offer a very handsome sum of money to the woman to go away and press her claim, real or fictitious, no further.

But the greedy creature laughed Lady Bellinda's unwise liberality to scorn, and when pressed to say what she would accept, named a sum that was simply preposterous, and the lawyer contemptuously told her so, as he left the room without further delay. Nay, he did more, he went straight to Lady Bellinda, and told her that he would be no party to such a bare-faced, impudent extortion as this vulgar woman was attempting to practice, and her ladyship, for the sake of peace, was almost ready to submit to.

"You will not buy peace," the lawyer said, almost sternly. "She will be constantly coming to you for money, no matter how large a sum you now give her, and if you yield once, you put yourself altogether in her power, for by buying her off you tacitly admit her claim to be just and she will not only hold the same rod over you that she does now, but her capacity for mischief will be indefinitely increased, and you may rest assured she will use her power to the utmost."

To which exhortation Lady Bellinda could make no reply, she could only place herself in the lawyer's hands and consent to be guided entirely by him. Neither of them, however, was prepared for Mrs. Robson's next move, which was a masterstroke.

A few days after Mr. Graham's last visit she presented herself before the stipendiary magistrate at Weydonford, and describing herself as a poor woman, asked for an order from him to take possession of her daughter, at present known as Cora Lyster, who was being wilfully and wickedly kept from her by the Marquis of Lamorna and his sister.

Of course the order was not made on her unsupported statement, but the magistrates promised that the matter should be inquired into, and Mrs. Robson left the court with the exultant consciousness that she had secured a splendid advertisement for her pretended wrongs, that her story would be commented upon by hundreds of newspapers, before forty-eight hours had passed over her head, and that she had made it more than ever desirable for Lady Bellinda to purchase her silence. It was in consequence of this that the old lady requested both Cora and Fleming Cadbury to write at once to Walter and urge his immediate return to England.

"I must take matters into my own hands now," she said, positively. "Cora and Walter must be married, then she will have a legal guardian, one too from whom no one can take her."

So the letters were written, and at the last moment Lady Bellinda added a line of her own. But as we have seen, they did not reach their destination, and Walter, all unconscious of the call which he would have hastened to obey, went back to that most dangerous place in the world for him, the city of Lima, there to meet the man who had robbed his father of his life, and him of the knowledge of his birthright—Don Rodrigo de Castellaro.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A STARTLING REVELATION.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall.

AGAIN Walter Smith is in Callao Roads looking at the city of Lima in the distance, with its background of purple hills and snow-capped mountains stretching out far as the eye can see. No one comes to meet Walter and Dick, for none

of the Marsdens know that the two young men are so near the city.

The family have returned from their rancho at Chorrillos to their house on the banks of the Rimac, and thither the cousins, accompanied by their servants and big Nell, direct their steps. Dick is looking pale and is far from having completely recovered from his wound, but both the young men are in excellent spirits and delighted to get back to Lima again.

The very first member of the family whom they met on entering the house was Inez de Castellaro. She was crossing the hall, when the young men seemed to suddenly stand before her, and for a moment she could scarcely believe that her eyes were not deceiving her. The sound of their voices left no doubt on her mind, however, and her cheek flushed, her dark liquid eyes brightened and flashed, and she looked wonderfully beautiful as she held out her hand to welcome them home.

"Back at last," she said, with a beaming smile; "we have all been wondering if either of you ever meant to return. But you are not looking well, Dick, what is the matter?"

"Oh, I'm all right, or shall be very shortly. Is my father at home?"

"No, he is at the bank, but your grandfather is in the house, and I will tell my mother and Mary of your arrival."

Then with another smile she left them. They were at home, and the whole household were soon anxiously attending to their wants, and anticipating their wishes. Donna Lola Marsden was gracious and even cordial to her stepson and her husband's nephew, while Mary manifested her delight by effusively embracing the young men alternately, as though they had both been her brothers.

Their only painful meeting was with Mr. Marsden senior. The old man had failed and faded with alarming rapidity during the last six months. He still busied himself over letters and papers and long and deep calculations, and he still believed that the mines and the bank could not be carried on unless he were busy in pulling the strings that worked them.

But his memory was often at fault, he spoke of the same thing over and over again, mixed up the past and the present in a hopelessly confused manner, and, most fatal sign of all, was constantly falling off to sleep. At all hours of the day, in the act of lifting food to his mouth, his eyes would close and his head would nod forward and drop upon his breast. The candle of life was flickering in its socket, and would soon be burnt out.

During Walter's absence the old man had at various times hunted up such papers concerning the young man's father as he still possessed, and these he had made into a packet in readiness for him on his return. But it was not from his grandfather that Walter was to get the first hint of his true name and lineage.

On the very day of his arrival at his uncle's house Walter received a visit from Mr. Washington P. Masson, in whose hands, it will be remembered, he had placed the business which the Marquis of Lamorna had entrusted to him.

"Wal, stranger!" that gentleman began, in an aggrieved tone and manner, "you've been away a tidy spell, I calculate, and I'll be wanting interest on that two hundred pounds that has been in your pockets instead of mine for the last three months, I guess!"

"Why? Have you succeeded?" asked Walter, eagerly.

"Washington P. Masson never fails, sir. He can't afford to fail, sir. When men point at Washington P. Masson, they point at a success, and if he ever did make one success greater than another, he's made it now. It ought to have been three hundred instead of two," with a sigh, "but I'm a man of my word, so now to begin."

"If your information is worth more than the two hundred agreed upon, Mr. Masson, you shall have it, but I must be the judge of that," with a smile; "and now please begin. You'll stay and hear what he has to say, Dick."

For young Marsden, thinking his presence might not be desired, had risen to go.

"Certainly, if you wish it," he replied, as he resumed his seat, while Mr. Masson took from his capacious breast pocket a large leather case filled with papers, which he laid upon the table and very deliberately began to open.

"My commission from you was," he said, with his usual nasal twang, "to find Lord William Lyster, if he was alive, or to bring you proof of his death, and, furthermore, if he was dead to obtain proof of his marriage, if he ever was married, and of the birth and whereabouts of his children if he ever had any."

"Yes," returned Walter, eagerly; "but tell me first of all, is he alive?"

"No, stranger, he ain't alive; he died nigh on four and twenty years ago in this very city—leastways, close to it; but I'll give my facts in my own way, if you please."

"Go on," said Walter, with a tone and gesture which indicated quite as much impatience as resignation; "I won't interrupt you any more."

"Won't you?" doubtfully. "Then I'll read over my notes, the facts that you gave me, and what I've got since."

Walter nodded his head, and Mr. Masson read from a sheet of paper before him.

"William Lyster, second son of the seventh Marquis of Lamorna, born at Lamorna Castle, on the second of May, eighteen hundred and —, took his degree at Oxford, and travelled about Europe until eighteen hundred and forty-six, when he came to America. That's your part of the story, stranger. I ain't inquired much about his goings on for two years after that, while you say he was travelling about with a young English engineer named Steventon, who died in San Francisco. My inquiries practically began with him here in Lima in eighteen hundred and forty-eight, when he had an account at the Orient Bank. Am I right? That's as far as you brought me, ain't it?"

"Yes, all my information ended there," replied Walter.

"So far so good," resumed Mr. Masson. "I needn't tell you how I bribed clerks and compared handwritings and hunted the matter out step by step, or why, contrary to arrangement, I didn't inform Mr. Richard Marsden of my discoveries; but I'll just give you the gist of what I learnt, and you can look at the proofs later on. When he first came to Lima, Lord William Lyster called himself William Lyster Smith. The probability is that he travelled through America under this name from the beginning, for he presented letters of introduction from the father of the young man who had been his companion, a Mr. Steventon, a civil engineer in London, who wrote of him as his friend, Mr. William Lyster Smith, and as he had no special motive for assuming an alias in coming to Peru, the presumption is that he adopted the name of Smith on first arriving on this side of the Atlantic."

Walter's face had flushed, then turned pale again. His hands had become cold and clammy. His mouth was hot and dry; his heart palpitated with repressed emotion, for a new and strange hope had sprung up within him. His wildest flights of fancy had never connected the mystery concerning his own father with the fate of the missing brother of the Marquis of Lamorna.

To have done so would in his mind have seemed like madness and presumption, for if he were Lord William Lyster's son, then was he also heir to the title and wealth of the marquis. It seemed incredible, impossible, and yet the detective's story all tended to that conclusion.

But Walter dared not speak, dared not hope, and yet he was conscious that if this wild fancy of his should really be an illusion, the disappointment would be more than he could bear, would indeed be the severest blow that had ever yet been dealt him, although a moment before the thought had never entered his head. Masson had paused as though to watch the effect of his words; but now, apparently satisfied, he returned to his papers.

"Mr. William Lyster Smith drew money from England through the Orient Bank in Lima in his proper name, but he opened a small account in Marsden's bank in this city under the name of William L. Smith. A comparison of handwriting, in addition to the fact that it can be proved that the same notes which were taken from the one bank by William Lyster were paid into the other by William Lyster Smith, will amply satisfy anybody with a head on his shoulders that William L. Smith was identical with Lord William Lyster. A few weeks after his arrival in Lima this Mr. Smith married the daughter of Richard Marsden senior, still living in this house, and the entry of the marriage of which you will perceive I have a copy, is signed William Lyster Smith, and his father is described as Walter Lyster, gentleman."

"But how could that be?" here interrupted Walter; "how could he account for his bearing the name of Smith while his father's name was Lyster?"

"In a hundred ways," replied Mr. Masson, coolly. "The probability is the question was never asked him; but a man may always tack another name on to his own if he has a mind to. For my own part I'd be called Washington P. Masson Smith to-morrow if 'twas made worth my while."

Walter signed for him to continue his report, and he went on reading.

"Ten months after Mr. William Lyster Smith's marriage with Miss Marsden a son was born, and I find that he was registered as Walter Lyster, though of that fact only the father seems to have been aware at the time or to have thought of since until I made it my business to hunt it out. The rest of my story you know. Mr. Smith was murdered at the Villa Rosa, a few miles from this city, on the eve of the first anniversary of his wedding-day, and he was buried as William L. Smith, which will show how very little was known or thought of his second name, since only the initial of it was used."

"So true is that that I never heard my mother mention it," exclaimed Walter, trying to repress his excitement, "and, therefore, I feel that there must be a mistake somewhere."

"Don't see it," replied the Yankee, coolly. "My name is Washington P. Masson. I die and my widow, who had never seen me a year before, calls herself Mrs. Masson, and in the course of time forgets that there is such a letter as P. in my name, and yet the name I was born and sprinkled to was Washington Priest, and if a maiden aunt hadn't died and left me a thousand dollars on condition I took the name of Masson, I should be Washington Priest to this very day."

Walter was silent; a conflicting rush of thought and feeling swept over his mind, and the Yankee seemed to give expression to some of the questions that agitated him when he said:

"The proofs I have got, as far as they go, are clear enough, and I don't doubt any jury would agree with me that Lord William Lyster and William Lyster Smith were one and the same man; but, from what I've heard, the dead man left papers that were stolen; if we could get hold of those papers our work would be settled up sharp, and the account closed."

"If," echoed Walter, bitterly. "I came to Lima to find those very papers, little dreaming that the inquiries I promised to make for a friend could in any way concern my own father. Even now I cannot believe it."

"Wal, 'tis a stunner to be sure, and the marquis ain't got a son of his own, I'm told, so you'll come in for a title and a pile of dollars one of these days. Would you like to look over these papers that are proof of what I've been telling you, before you hand over the two hundred we bargained for?"

"I should. Will you see me to-morrow morning to arrange money matters?"

"With pleasure. Here is a photograph of the signature of William Lyster in the books of the Orient Bank; here one of William Lyster Smith in the books of Marsden's Bank. Copy of the entry

of marriage at the British Consulate, the photographs can be compared with the original signature in this case; here also is a copy of the register of your own birth, sir, and a variety of other documents which you can look through at your leisure. For the rest of the case, if personal description is wanted your maternal uncle and grandfather can no doubt fill up the blanks, but 'tis a pity we can't get hold of the box of papers that was stolen—a thousand pities."

Then Mr. Masson took his departure with a flourish of his hat, and Dick Marsden, who had been silent all this time, now grasped his cousin's hand, and said, with genuine heartiness:

"I congratulate you, old fellow, with all my heart. I am almost as much pleased as though I had come into a great fortune myself. You thoroughly deserve it. Now you can go to England and marry the girl you love. I only wish," in a sadder tone, "that I could go with you."

"You must go with me, if it is true, Dick; but I can't believe it," with almost tremulous agitation; "it seems so utterly impossible. I have always felt that I was a poor man, with my own way to make in the world, and now, to think that position, and such a position, to say nothing of almost boundless wealth, belong to me by right of inheritance. No, it is too much to believe."

"I suppose Lord Lamorna had no suspicion that what Masson has just told us could be possible?" asked Dick, declining to admit that any pinnacle of fortune was too lofty for the merits of his cousin.

"No," replied Walter, "and yet," he added, thoughtfully, "I don't know, I am not sure. I remember that the first time Lady Bellinda, his sister, spoke to me, she asked me abruptly who my father was. I felt annoyed at the time, and now I remember they have often asked me questions about my father that I thought strange, and my mother told me that Lady Bellinda cross-questioned her in a most singular manner the first time they met. You remember too, Tim O'Grady said I was the image of my father; if this thing is possible the likeness will account for the interest Lady Bellinda and her brother took in me. And again, how strangely things crowd into one's memory that passed un-noticed at the time. Fleming Cadbury once said I was remarkably like the missing Lord William Lyster."

"For my own part I haven't a doubt about the matter," said Dick, warmly; "but we must get hold of that box of papers. We must, let the price for them be what it will."

Walter started, then he said:

"I certainly must get them if possible; but I might pay too dearly even for them. I would not place a barrier between Cora and myself for the proudest coronet in England. Anything short of honour I would gladly give for the possession of those papers, but they must come into my hands fairly."

"For my own part I should not hesitate at a little diplomacy, not to say deceit," returned Dick, with a laugh, "especially when the object in view is to recover what is undoubtedly your own property. I have no objection to sup with old Scratch himself provided I may choose my own spoon, and nothing would please me better than to outwit Castellaro and his lovely relative; the sensation of hoisting the engineer with his own petard would be quite refreshing."

Walter slightly smiled as he said:

"Don't compromise me in any way, Dick. I must meet Castellaro. I have given my word that I will do so, and I will keep it. Besides, I wish to meet him, he and I have a long account to settle, and I have a presentiment that one of us will not survive the interview."

Dick involuntarily shuddered, then he said:

"Take my advice, write to England to-night, tell Lord Lamorna what you have discovered, and what you are still waiting for. Get your letter written and I'll have it sent off with the

advices for England from the bank to-night."

"But will it not be rather premature?" asked Walter, hesitatingly.

"Not at all, and you have not written to the marquis for a long time."

"Because he is ill, and perhaps could not read my letters."

"Then write to Lady Bellinda and to your adored Cora, but make haste, I'll have the bag kept open for you."

With which Dick Marsden went away to his own room and there wrote a letter to Lady Bellinda, apologising for so doing on account of his cousin's unfortunate relations with Castellaro and begging her to use all her influence to persuade Walter to return home immediately, and without fulfilling his purpose of trying conclusions with that dangerous personage.

"It may be in time to save him," thought the devoted fellow as a couple of hours later he saw his cousin's letter as well as his own consigned to the letter bag.

Even as he was doing this, however, the danger he feared for Walter was on its way to him. That very night as the two young men entered the sleeping room where big Nell was stretched on her rug, Dick noticed a small white note on the table and called Walter's attention to it. The latter opened it, and reading its contents he muttered:

"I thought so."

"What is it?" asked Dick, anxiously.

"From Castellaro."

"Let me look at it."

The next instant the paper was in his hands.

"MEET me at the Red House in the Strada Ria to-morrow evening at eight o'clock. Come alone and unarmed. CASTELLARO."

"You won't go?" asked Dick in alarm.

"I shall most certainly go."

"Alone and unarmed?"

"Alone, but I shall not go unarmed."

"But why go alone?"

"Because I would not risk your life as well as my own; besides, this man and I must meet and fight our battle out to the bitter end."

Dick said no more, but he resolved that he would be present, and if need be, save his cousin's life, if the sacrifice of his own were the price he paid for it.

(To be Continued.)

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

M. RIVIERE'S PROMENADE CONCERTS.

M. RIVIERE has commenced a new series of Promenade Concerts of attractive character. The success attending Messrs. Gatti bids fair to accompany the new campaign. M. Riviere has classical Wednesday nights, on which, among other works, Mendelssohn's Reformation Symphony, Saint Saën's Symphony in A, and Beethoven's in C minor is performed. Tuesday is an operatic night, separate concerts being devoted to the works of Verdi, Gounod, and Wagner respectively. Welsh, Irish, and Scotch "Festivals" take place on three consecutive Thursdays, and on every Monday English ballads is a special feature. M. Riviere requests visitors to refrain from demanding the repetition of any song or other piece of music, and lays down the rule that when an encore is absolutely insisted upon no second piece will in any case be substituted, the last verse or the last movement simply being repeated. Much approval is bestowed upon the entire performance. M. Riviere is greeted with applause when he appears in the orchestra.

ALHAMBRA THEATRE.

SELDOM has anything been performed at the Alhambra more creditable to the management

and the artistes than the new comic opera "La Petite Mademoiselle." It was produced at the Renaissance, Paris, last April, the libretto being by MM. Meilhac and Halévy. The adaptation has been accomplished admirably by Mr. R. Reece and Mr. H. S. Leigh. Not the least attractive feature in "La Petite Mademoiselle" is the music, which is charming throughout. The trio of doctors in the last act, "Call the patient weak and sickly," is brim full of musical fun. The melodies are perfectly exhilarating and are as buoyant and catching as the comic music of Rossini. In another style may be named with great praise the martial song at the barricade, sung with such remarkable spirit by Miss Constance Loseby. Mr Harry Paulton was welcomed with great enthusiasm by his admirers at the Alhambra, and frequently stimulated them to hearty laughter. With a strong chorus, and the excellent band under M. Jacobi, nothing was wanting to make the representation complete. A pretty dance of the period, "The Rigadon," with music by the famous French composer Rameau, pleased so much that it was repeated. The elegant costumes were greatly admired, and the quaintness and refinement of the entire scene deserved the praise bestowed upon it. A new farce called "The Mad Painter" preceded the opera, but it was destitute of humour.

CRYSTAL PALACE CONCERTS.

THE concert of Saturday commenced with Mozart's overture to "Zauberflöte," beautifully played by the orchestra, and the Symphony of Schuman, No. 1 in B flat, excited the great admiration. One of the most interesting features of the concert was the appearance of Maurice Dengremont, the young violinist, a native of Rio Janeiro, who, after receiving his first musical education from his father, afterwards completed his studies under Léonard, the eminent Parisian violinist. His success in Berlin, Vienna, and other continental cities was remarkable. M. Dengremont played Mednelsehn's Concerto for the Violin, and displayed great proficiency. M. Dengremont's reading of the concerto gave proof of high intelligence and careful study. As his second piece, M. Dengremont gave a violin solo with pianoforte accompaniment, "Souvenir d'Haydn." Another novelty of the concert was the ballet music of "Sylvia," a work produced at the Paris Opera in 1876, and since arranged by the composer as an orchestral suite for concert performance. The music made a favourable impression. The other items of the concert were all familiar from frequent repetition. The overture, the symphony, and minuet were finely played by the band, and Miss Thursby's brilliant bravura singing was displayed with special success in the two vocal pieces.

LYCEUM THEATRE.

A CROWDED audience assembled to witness the first representation this season of "Hamlet," and the cordial greeting given to Mr. Irving and Miss Ellen Terry as they respectively appeared evinced the gratification derived from their resumption of the parts in which they have won such deserved praise. Throughout last season we believe not a week passed but there was at least one performance of "Hamlet," and judging from the manner in which the play was received, it is probable that a similar policy will again be found advantageous to the management, for it is already announced that "until further notice" each Wednesday is to be devoted to this Shakespearian masterpiece. It is, happily, now superfluous to dwell upon the qualities which make Mr. Irving's "Hamlet" a most masterly impersonation, the outcome of earnest study and quick perception of the many phases of the philosophical Prince's character, but it is not too much to say that the careful observer may from time to time note fresh points in the performance, unobtrusively introduced, which seem to give increased truthfulness to what had already been thought as com-

plete an embodiment as was possible. Miss Ellen Terry's Ophelia is, as last season, a charming realisation of one of the poet's most delightful creations, instinct with girlish grace and tenderness, and in the manifestation of her hopeless love ever evoking the sympathies of the spectators. In the other leading parts the cast is the same as before, Miss Pouncefort being the best Gertrude of recent years, Mr. C. Cooper the Polonius, Mr. Tyars the King, Mr. Forrester Horatio, and Mr. F. Cooper the Laertes.

IMPERIAL THEATRE.

THE younger Colman's comedy "The Poor Gentleman," has been revived, thus forming the second this season of Miss Litton's pleasant reproductions of a bygone age. This work, brought out in 1802, five years after "The Heir at Law," is weakly constructed, but it makes us acquainted with several singular personages, having such distinct peculiarities as to almost create the regret that the author had not reserved some of them for another piece, when, perhaps, their characteristics could have been more skilfully developed and backed up by a stronger story. With all its faults, however, "The Poor Gentleman" is a very amusing piece, thoroughly Colmanesque in its prodigality of witticism and comic situation. The piece is tastefully mounted, and was received with much approbation by a well-filled house.

A BAFFLED LAWYER.

EVEN the immortal Daniel Webster sometimes met with more than his match. He once tried, in an ungallant way, to break down a woman's evidence. She was handsome, well educated, and possessed great self-possession and decision of character. Webster, at a glance, had the sagacity to foresee that her testimony, if it contained anything of importance, would have great weight with the court and jury. He therefore resolved, if possible, to break her down. And when she answered the first question put to her, "I believe!" Webster roared out: "We don't want to hear what you believe, we want to hear what you know!" The lady calmly replied that she was aware of that fact, and calmly proceeded with her testimony.

Notwithstanding his repeated efforts to disconcert her, she pursued the even tenor of her way, until Webster, becoming fearful of the result, arose, apparently in great agitation, and drawing out his large snuff-box, thrust his thumb and finger to the very bottom, and carrying the pinch to both nostrils, drew it up a gusto. Then extracting from his pocket a very large handkerchief, which flowed to his feet as he brought it to the front, he blew his nose with a report that rang distant and loud through the crowded hall. His next question was in reference to the neatness of a lady concerned in the case. "Was she a neat woman?" he asked. "I cannot give you full information as to that, sir. She had one very dirty trick," said the witness, calmly. "She took snuff!" The effect was overwhelming! the roar in the court was such that Webster sat down, and let the witness severely alone.

In the report of one of the Government Inspectors of Schools, printed in the recently published Education Department blue book, occurs the following illustration of the versatility of the juvenile mind:—"In my ordinary reports upon schools I try to impress upon managers and teachers the need of encouraging the thinking qualities of children. To show the necessity of so doing, I may state that in answer to the question, 'What is the feminine of heir?' I received as replies, 'rabbit,' 'wind,' 'hares.' And I was told that the plural of 'knife' was fork."

CLARICE VILLIERS; OR, WHAT LOVE FEARED.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MAKING A FOE.

His stifled wrath is brimming high
In darkened brow and flushing eye,
As waves before the barque divide
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet, and no more. SCOTT.

As Aricia's training for her entrée into the world of fashion made rapid progress Lord Redmond began to discard some of the precautions which he had hitherto observed in going abroad with his bride. These precautions had had for their object the avoidance of coming under the possible observation of any of his own set while Lady Redmond still retained any traces of that gaucherie which might have attracted attention and provoked comment or inquiry.

Hence up to a certain point during the frequent visits of the wedded pair to theatre or concert-room the adoption of morning costume and the selection of back seats in the pit, or some analogous humble position, seemed to Redmond a safe and expedient course. The young man's object in thus haunting the dramatic or lyric stage was to give Lady Redmond every opportunity to avail herself of what Everard found to be a very important means of forwarding his wishes.

The cultivation of his wife's musical taste was of primary importance for the role he desired her to play, but it was of much greater consequence that she should form at least some notion of the works and ways of life by the reflex of that stage which is said to hold the mirror up to nature.

But Lord Redmond was too proud of his beautiful consort to always conceal her in the inconspicuous and uncomfortable parts of the theatres and concert-rooms. Aricia had passed her short probation with brilliant success, and had acquired the calm tone and exquisite polish of the patrician with marvellous rapidity. It was still the off season, and he was not likely to encounter any of his relatives whose kinship might entitle them to propound close inquiries, and for casual acquaintances they would only vaguely wonder at Aricia's beauty and ton, and envy him so fair and distinguished a partner of the box.

So for the future his tactics were changed. To the landlady's unlimited surprise and unqualified satisfaction she was now frequently called upon to aid Lady Redmond at the toilette. The good woman's knowledge of the subject was too limited, and her thick fingers too little dextrous, to make her a very accomplished Abigail, but the enraptured enthusiasm which the worthy landlady displayed at the toilettes of sheeny silks, of soft fabrics, and filmy lace, to say nothing of the adjuncts of jewels of price, in which she assisted to endure Aricia, helped notably to supplement her want of skill and capacity.

Aricia's first public appearance in this manner was a trial of considerable severity to her. London, that is to say, fashionable London, is never really empty, whether it be during the season or otherwise, and when the girl found that the private box where she sat became at once the focus towards which a host of lorgnons were pointed, she had a very uncomfortable sensation of being "the observed of all observers."

Nevertheless, Aricia bore herself well and bravely under an infliction so novel, and endured the eye-homage with all the apparent unconsciousness of a queen of society. And Redmond, turning first his admiring look on the lovely woman beside him, and then sweeping the house with a rapid glance, and noting the levelled tubes at scores of eyes, both of men and women, felt strengthened in his own proud satisfaction that he had secured a bride who would do amplest honour to his ancient line.

The piece presented at the fashionable theatre that evening was a domestic drama in which, with power and pathos, some of the deeper feelings of the human soul were appealed to. From the moment of the curtain's rise all Aricia's attention was concentrated upon the stage. She had, during the overture, at her husband's request, directed her lorgnon at a few celebrities whom he had pointed out to her. But her interest in the audience which filled the brilliant semicircle was not sufficiently great to win even one glance from the absorbing interest of the performance.

Lord Redmond was not interested in a similar degree, and occasionally threw a glance over the house. He was engaged in so doing when he suddenly gave an involuntary start of so pronounced a character that Aricia looked up inquiringly and in surprise.

But her husband was looking at the stage with an expression of entire unconcern. He did not intend that Aricia should know what had caused his sudden emotion if he could prevent it. That cause had been the entrance of Lord Boscawen to the pit stalls.

The son of the Marquis of Calderfield was the very last man whom Lord Redmond would have desired to meet under such circumstances. Why, Everard could scarcely tell himself, but he had the certain instinct of danger whose premonition is almost infallible.

How much or how little Lord Boscawen knew of Redmond's relations to Aricia while both were at Tremawr Everard could not tell. Neither was he aware whether or not Boscawen had ever seen Aricia there. Concerning his former rival's knowledge Lord Redmond was reduced to vague surmises, but he felt assured that the former had at least some notion of the cause which had led to the dissolution of Everard's engagement to Miss Villiers, and he feared that some chance word of Boscawen's might precipitate the revelation of his marriage with Aricia before he was himself prepared for publicity.

Redmond could not refrain from watching his late rival furtively. During whatever intercourse had passed between them in the past, Everard had felt an entire indifference with regard to Boscawen. It is true that some faint suspicion of the latter's treachery had flitted through Redmond's mind during his interview with Captain Pleydell, when the soldier stated bluntly that the marquis's son might have been the prime mover of the murderous assault in the grove and the subsequent disposal of Everard's unconscious body in the ancient oak. But the idea has passed almost instantly.

Lord Redmond did not deem that Boscawen had motive sufficient to drive him to such an outrage, nor did he hold the ex-secretary either malignant or courageous enough to dare the crime. Still, that night, taking new note of the expression of Lord Boscawen's pale face, Redmond's heart told him that it was the visage of one very capable of evil when events rendered evil pleasant or profitable.

Lord Boscawen was with two young associates, and although the trio were in rule with regard to correct evening dress and general demeanour, Redmond could readily detect that each member of the party was more or less flushed with wine. In place of any attention to the stage, they were conversing carelessly and sweeping with their opera-glasses the boxes, the dress-circle, and even the unfashionable parts of the house for objects either of interest or ridicule.

As yet they had not noticed Aricia or her husband, for the former was partially hidden by the lace curtain of her side of the logge, and Redmond had involuntarily drawn slightly towards the back of the box. He was indeed balancing in his mind the question whether he should or should not withdraw his wife before Boscawen had seen her.

But Lord Redmond felt that he had no reasonable excuse to offer Aricia for conduct so singular, and the next instant he felt a very distinct anger at himself for having succumbed to an absurd and unfounded timidity. Just then the act-drop descended upon a very effective tableau and amidst general applause.

Lord Boscawen and his friends rose from

their seats and passed out. It was quite possible that they had found the piece too "slow" and tame for them, and would not return. Such at least was Redmond's hope. But just before the curtain was rung up for the second act the party came back, and each member of it having assumed an easy posture by leaning his back against the orchestra, began to make a fresh and exhaustive search for pretty female faces to admire, and eccentric male visages at which to scoff.

The curtain rose upon a landscape "set" so beautiful, that Aricia leaned forward with an irrepressible and almost childish emotion of delight. The action brought her well within the field of view of Boscawen's companion's opera-glasses.

The gentleman took a protracted look at Lady Redmond, then turning to Boscawen, diverted the attention of the latter to her by a gesture more energetic than is usual in good society. As Boscawen turned his face towards the Redmonds' box, Everard made an involuntary movement, as if to draw his wife into the diaphanous yet partial shelter of the curtain. The action was too late and futile, and had only the result of bringing the young man himself into greater prominence.

Lord Redmond could mark the expression of surprise on Boscawen's face as the latter's regard rested on Aricia. The look hardly seemed one of recognition. Upon that point Redmond could not satisfy himself. But that it was one of the most intense admiration he could have no doubt whatever.

After a prolonged stare at Lady Redmond, Boscawen lowered his lorgnon, gave a casual glance at her husband, whom he evidently recognised, and turning to his companions, addressed some observation to them which appeared to excite both astonishment and laughter, and led them both to give fresh attention to the occupant of the box.

Lord Redmond gnawed his moustache savagely, and swore inwardly with vexation. He blamed now the culpable rashness which had risked his own and perhaps his wife's recognition by such flâneurs and gossipers of society as these men.

But he had soon a course of annoyance which swallowed up all minor sources of vexation. Lord Boscawen had changed places with one of his companions in such a manner as to place himself nearest to that side of the house on which the box which Everard and Lady Redmond occupied was situated.

Then applying his lorgnon to his eyes he kept up a determined and unflinching stare at the lady. Occasionally he intermitted this occupation by turning to one of his companions and making some observation which, by the smiles with which it was received, Lord Redmond could easily judge must be of insolent tenor.

Such marked conduct could not be long persisted in without attracting the notice of the other habitués of the stalls. Soon every eye amongst the black garbed, broad shirt-fronted men was turned at intervals more or less frequent towards Aricia.

At first absorbed in the interest of the stage the poor girl did not notice that she had thus become an object of this daring and impolite scrutiny. But happening to cast a glance down at the stalls, and finding herself the cynosure of all eyes and all opera glasses, a burning blush suffused her fair face, and she turned to her husband in painful confusion.

Redmond's heart was burning within him irefully at the cool and premeditated insult put upon his wife. He turned red and pale by turns, and gritted his teeth savagely as Aricia turned that appealing glance towards him as if for protection.

But what could he do? His will was good to inflict summary chastisement on the coward who could thus inflict a cold-blooded outrage upon a defenceless woman. But the circumstances rendered him powerless. And the contagion was spreading. The action of the occupants of the stalls had been noted by the people in the other parts of the house, and all seemed by a tacit agreement to turn from the

minio tragedy going on behind the footlights to join in the sadder work of overwhelming with the fire of cruel questioning eyes-shots a helpless girl.

"What is it? What does it mean, Everard?" whispered Aricia, rising from her seat in uncontrollable excitement, and clutching her husband's arm with a convulsive grasp.

"Be calm, my darling," he replied, with a forced, husky laugh. "I—I do not understand—but—"

"Oh, Everard, I cannot bear it. Let us go—let us go home."

He found that she was shivering irrepressibly with an overpowering access of nervous agitation. He could see, too, that Boscawen was occupied in voluble speech to his two companions and the men around him. He could see the sardonic malice of his smile. Yes, it would be best to leave the place.

He hurried his wife from the box and down the broad staircase. In a few moments they stood in the lighted vestibule which led to the street. The hired brougham which had brought them was not to be expected until the principal piece had ended.

But Redmond espied a passing cab and hailed it instantly. It pulled up, the driver sprang from his box, and held open the door. Already Aricia, wrapped in her tasteful opera cloak, was crossing the pavement, when Lord Boscawen and his two companions came out from the entrance of the theatre boisterously. It was sufficiently clear that all three were still under the influence of the wine which they had imbibed.

"Ha! ha! pretty Miss Dornton!" cried Boscawen, making a grasp at Aricia's cloak. "I have something to say to you."

"Stand aside, my lord, and do not molest the lady!" cried Lord Redmond, in those deep tones of concentrated rage which sound in their measured intonation almost like the accent of calmness.

"Oh, yes, Redmond, I see you," replied Boscawen, not quitting his grasp on the delicate blue, fur-edged garment which he held.

"I'm going down to Tremawr," said Boscawen to Aricia. "What message shall I carry to the poor old savage mamma at the den? Shall I tell her you are the light-o'-love of—"

He had no opportunity to finish the sentence. Lord Redmond shot out his left arm and it landed with terrific effect upon Boscawen's face. He reeled back to the kerb, and losing his balance, fell face foremost in the thick mud with which the gutter was filled, for the night was a wet one.

The next instant Lord Redmond had hurried his wife into the cab, and it was driven off at the best speed the animal which propelled it was capable of. Assisted by his two companions Boscawen gained his feet. His appearance was deplorable in the extreme. Blood was flowing freely from the cuts which Redmond's knuckles and diamond ring had inflicted, and his evening dress was stained by plasters of thick mud. He shook his clenched fist savagely after the retreating cab.

"Curse you both!" he said in savage tones of bitterness. "I will have an ample revenge. I have done, and I will undo!"

CHAPTER XL.

CROSS PURPOSES.

Oh, many a shaft at random sent
Finds mark the archer little meant;
And many a word at random spoken
May soothe or wound a heart's that's broken.
SCOTT.

IMPORTANT private affairs had brought Mr. Villiers to London, and as his stay was likely to extend over some weeks, his family accompanied him. They would have ample time to return to Tremawr in order to keep their Christmas there.

The fact of Clarice Villiers being in town was sufficient to ensure the presence of Lord Bos-

cawen there also. And the same magnet drew Captain Bertram Pleydell thither after his discoveries at Fernham. Those discoveries had caused the young soldier much anxious thought. For his way did not appear at all clear to him.

That some imposture was being practised upon the Marquis of Calderfield appeared only too certain, and that Boscawen was a conscious factor in the deception might be held to be no less obvious. Equally certain was it that Bertram Pleydell was called upon to expose this nefarious scheming if it lay within his power to compass the exposure.

The young man's duty to the Earl of Calderfield led him to do this. Nor did his love for Clarice Villiers plead less strongly on the same side. But the whole subject was envenomed by difficulties. Pleydell could not bring himself to seek the marquis and break the subject. His sincere affection for the aged nobleman made him fear the result of imparting to Lord Calderfield that which he had discovered.

Whether the marquis gave or refused credence to the tale of Mrs. Piper the result might be equally disastrous. If Lord Calderfield believed the story, then farewell to the uneasy peace which he had gained. The repudiation of the new found son, the recommencement of that ceaseless search for Gwendoline and the marquis's own travels might be looked for as certain results.

If he did not believe, in what light could he regard Pleydell save as an officious pryer into other's affairs, and a bearer of false witness against his own kin? And what evidence of his own veracity had Pleydell to adduce?

In all probability the Piper would be, ere many days, upon the bosom of the broad Atlantic. There would be then none left who had held conferences with the woman who lay in Fernham churchyard, and nothing to prove that Mrs. Olyfaunt was not the very Gwendoline, Marchioness of Calderfield.

No, for the present at least Pleydell would hold his peace as regards the marquis. But the same reticence need not be observed in regard to Miss Clarice Villiers. He would leave his own love for her, hopeless as he deemed it, out of the question, the captain told himself. But were it not well to save—if hint of his might save her—this fair girl from the evil machinations of an impostor and a swindler?

His position as a recognised friend of the family would render it easy for him to procure an interview with Clarice. He would seek her and impart so much of his discoveries and suspicions as should at least suffice to prevent Clarice contradicting any binding engagement with Lord Boscawen. The latter had not meanwhile been idle.

Mr. Villiers had told him of the projected visit to London, and immediately Boscawen could escape from Elwood and his father he sought the town mansion of the Cornish M.P., by whom he was, as usual, received with open arms.

Change of scene had made but little difference to Clarice. Her demeanour was still marked by that calm which was little better than apathy. Mrs. Villiers viewed her daughter's condition with scarcely concealed apprehension, while her husband rubbed his hands and opined that this outward peace was an indication that Clarice had already forgotten her former lover, and would readily accept and be happy with the next eligible suitor who might present himself.

Poor man, he knew little of woman's heart. He was indefatigable in his persecution of Clarice on this matter. He had set his mind on seeing his daughter first Lady Boscawen, and later on Marchioness of Calderfield. The idea of this magnificent match grew to be a perfect monomania with the fussy gentleman. It was a great thing, he held, to represent at St. Stephen's an influential body such as the electors of Tremawr, but what was that honour in comparison to being the father of a marchioness? (What was an elector?)

For a time it seemed as though the stolid

inertia of Clarice's calm of despair would bid defiance to her father's constant entreaties and adjurations, as some granite cliff yields no inch to the ever wearying sea; but suddenly the girl succumbed.

"What does it matter?" she said to her mother, when the latter found her sitting in the boudoir, tearless, but with a look of rigid despair on her beautiful face. "I suppose I must live on, but what is life to me? If it will give pleasure to my father that I yield my hand to this man, even so let it be."

"But, Clarice," whispered the mother, as she pressed a tender kiss upon the white brow of her child, "you do not love him? Will this union make you happier?"

"No, mamma," replied Clarice, with sad decision, "that is impossible!"

"In the future you may learn to love Lord Boscawen," said Mrs. Villiers, hesitatingly, and rather as if to reassure herself than as hopeful consolation for her daughter.

"Never, mamma, never!" replied the girl, with a shudder of repulsion.

"Your father has always thought highly of him, Clarice," remarked Mrs. Villiers, with a slight accent of reproof in her tone. "And both you and myself liked him once."

"Yes, that is true," responded Clarice, wearily. "There was a time when, as Basil Olyfaunt, we saw but the best side of him. But even before he had relinquished that name I knew him as traitorous of heart."

"Against a traitor!" put in Mrs. Villiers, with acrimony.

Clarice's pale face flushed painfully.

"But he may make you happy, Clarice. Love may grow during wedlock's years," persisted Mrs. Villiers, anxious to gain some word which should assure her that Clarice was not to be abandoned to a joyless future.

"Let us hope so, dearest mamma," the girl replied, still with the same weary sadness, and kissing her mother fondly. "Let us speak no more of this. I am content to do what my father desires. More, none can ask or require of me."

Mrs. Villiers sighed, but did not pursue the subject farther. Her mind was, however, but ill at ease regarding her child's future peace. Lord Boscawen, acting upon an intimation from Mr. Villiers, lost no time in seeking an interview with Clarice. He quite understood that it was a foregone conclusion that his suit would be accepted, nor was he disappointed. With the same cold quiet which marked all she did now Clarice gave him her hand and her promise to be his bride.

"You will not forget, Lord Boscawen," she said, as she did so, "what I told you at our last interview. What I said then, I endorse to-day. My hand may be yours indeed, for it is still mine to bestow. My love can never be yours, for my heart holds not, nor can ever hold, such a feeling again. Wifely duty I can yield you, but you must look for naught holier or deeper."

Boscawen pressed her hand tenderly.

"I will be such a lover-husband, Clarice," he said, with earnestness, "that I will make you love me. It shall grow up, my darling one, even in your own despite."

And he sealed the betrothal with a kiss. But he could not fail to mark the shuddering repugnance with which the girl shrank from his embrace, nor to notice the deathly pallor of her face, the trembling of her hand. He did not feel the confidence in the future which his words expressed.

It was not his policy to protract an interview so obviously painful to his betrothed. Clarice's promise had been given, and time would work for him. It was fortunate for Captain Pleydell, who arrived in town on the next day and called on Mr. Villiers, that Lord Boscawen had no suspicion either of his late inquiries or of the soldier's feelings with regard to Clarice. As it was, the girl's languor and apparent indifference to everything did not afford Bertram much chance of making the revelation.

But a brief opportunity occurred to a little

private conversation, and Captain Pleydell seized the moment with soldierly promptitude, and without preamble acquainted Miss Villiers with as much of his supposed discovery as he judged it expedient to do.

Several times during the recital, which seemed to raise some transient excitement in the girl's breast and flushed her cheeks with a faint colour, Clarice strove, both by word and gesture, to stop Bertram's revelations. The efforts were, however, ineffectual.

The soldier had resolved that his auditor should hear his tale to its conclusion; and in his earnest desire to warn her had become oblivious of the rigid rules of good manners. When his torrent of words had ceased, Clarice said, with some energy:

"I thank you for your good intentions, Captain Pleydell. I trust, however, that your suspicions are wrong. At least, whatever such you may entertain in the future no word of them may be breathed into my ears?"

"Why may they not?" queried Pleydell, brusquely, in utter amazement.

"Because I have given Lord Boscawen my pledge to become his wife."

CHAPTER XLI.

TAKING WING.

Oh, lonely, very lonely, is the house
Where love, domestic love, no longer nestles!
Hood.

LORD REDMOND'S unlucky encounter with Boscawen at the theatre was the occasion of considerable anxiety to the former. That the Marquis of Calderfield's son had attempted to put a studied insult upon Aricia and himself Everard did not doubt. No other explanation of Boscawen's flagrant discourtesy was possible. It followed then that he had, for some reason, an animus against Redmond—some hatred of old-standing and of much bitterness.

And now that feeling would assume a tenfold virulence. The buffet which Lord Redmond had dealt with unsparring vigour, and Boscawen's ignominious overthrow before his companions, could not fail to add fuel to the fire. So far, therefore, as the latter's ability to injure Lady Redmond or her husband extended, so far would it doubtless be exerted.

Mentally debating these things, Lord Redmond asked himself, not without some apprehension, what the scope of his foe's malignity might be able to achieve. Any adverse influence that Boscawen might be able to exert could but be brought to bear either upon Redmond's father or Mrs. Dornton.

It was of Lord Boscawen's evil offices with regard to the former that Everard felt most fear. Only two days previous the young man had received a letter from the Marquis of Malverres, which caused Redmond some little anxiety. Its tone was querulous and complaining.

It more than hinted that Everard was forgetting in the dissipation of town life the duties which a country gentleman should fulfil on his own demesnes when the season is over. And in the postscript mention was made of some business details which the old peer considered required his son's immediate presence at the paternal mansion.

It was clear to Everard that if he did not at once obey this requisition he would seriously anger the marquis. Nor was it less clear to the young man that if the marquis were apprized of his son's marriage by a stranger and a foe, his wrath would be extreme, and perhaps unappeasable.

That was not to be thought of. Redmond must at any rate anticipate Lord Boscawen as the bearer of that intelligence. Any unpleasantness which might ensue from the machinations of the latter in the case of Mrs. Dornton must be met and defeated subsequently. Aricia was a wife now, and even the cynical recluse might soften at finding that her child was a prospective marchioness.

So on the morning after the fracas Lord Red-



[THE OUTRAGE.]

mond, after taking counsel with his wife, determined upon a flying visit to his ancestral seat in order to take the initiative in breaking the matter of his marriage to the marquis. The young man did not purpose that his visit should be prolonged beyond a couple of days, and arranged that he would then, if things went well, return and carry Lady Redmond down to meet his father.

Brief as was to be Everard's absence, Aricia viewed their temporary parting with apprehension and unconcealed concern. She clung around her husband's neck, her glorious eyes tear fraught, her fond farewells broken by sobs, nor could all Redmond's tender assurances entirely reconcile her to their short separation. The young man's spirits were scarcely higher. He knew the haughty spirit of the old patrician, and he felt that the disclosure he had to make was in a measure thrust upon him and premature.

Aricia was not allowed much time during which to indulge her mood of sadness after Everard's departure. Although the young wife's wardrobe and jewel-case had of late received notable accessions, Everard had yet held that many preparations had to be made to fit Lady Redmond for her forthcoming journey. He had left Aricia ample funds, and she, with the assistance of the landlady, was to employ them and the two days in getting everything ready for the journey.

Somewhat fatigued by a day's severe shopping Aricia was sitting in the little parlour as the evening's shades closed in. She had not yet rung for lights, but poised upon the music stool before the piano, was dreamily and listlessly striking some chords of one of Mendelssohn's soft sweet songs. Her thoughts were not with the sad, tender cadences, however, but had flown to the absent one.

A sudden, loud, and imperative knock at the street door made the girl start nervously. In a few moments she could hear voices in rapid and excited colloquy in the little hall. One was that

of the landlady, the other a man's. Aricia rose to her feet in sudden terror. What had happened to Everard? was her first terrible thought. Then came the landlady's hesitating rap at the room door. She was bidden to enter, and Lady Redmond stepped nervously forward to meet her.

"Mr. Bourchier," the woman announced, placing the two wax candles which she carried on the table. "He has brought—"

But the object of the landlady's announcement neither waited for invitation to enter the room nor for the finish of her explanation, but stepped in quickly.

"Lose not a moment," he cried, imperiously, to the landlady. "Let everything be ready in a half hour."

Then he turned to greet Aricia, who stood in gathering yet indefinite apprehension.

"Mr. Bourchier," she said, "what—"

The man held up his hand, as if for silence, and gave some sharp hurried directions to the landlady, who quickly left the room with murmured exclamations of pity. Then Mr. Bourchier took Lady Redmond's hand and led her to a chair. Aricia noted that his swarthy face was as pale as it was possible for such a complexion to be, and that his hand trembled.

"Have you the courage to hear sad tidings bravely?" he asked. "And have you the heart and will to act upon them?"

A cold spasm shot through Aricia's heart.

"My mother?" she gasped.

"Is dying!"

"Oh, merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Aricia, springing to her feet with a sharp bitter cry. Mr. Bourchier, unsay those words."

"They are too true. The physicians doubt whether Mrs. Dornon can see another sun rise. That she should see it set is not within the range of human possibility."

"And I have slain her!"

Lady Redmond hid her face in her hands and broke into a passion of sobs.

"No, no. Be calm and not unjust to yourself. That my cousin felt your flight very deeply at first is certain. But she said little and—"

"Where then was your promise to act as reconciler between us? Why was I not informed of my mother's illness?"

"Be reasonable," replied Mr. Bourchier. "Hard and stern as of yore, Mrs. Dornon repulsed all my good offices on your behalf until to-day. I had paid another visit to the Folly to resume them, and to my horror found that your mother had been stricken down the previous day by paralysis. Her uncouth servant had not apparently either the sense to summon a doctor or to write to the address which I had given her. I sent to Tremawr for a physician. By-and-bye your mother recovered the partial use of speech. Then all her piteous moan was for 'Aricia! Aricia!'"

Again the girl's passionate sobs burst forth.

"My mother, my mother, forgive me. I come to thee!"

"Lord Redmond is I learn away from home," said Mr. Bourchier. "But I will take charge of you to the Folly. We must leave here speedily, for if we do not catch the next train we shall not be able to get to Tremawr to-night."

"But Everard?" queried Aricia, faintly.

"We will send him a telegram from Tremawr in the morning. Do not delay."

Half an hour later Aricia and Mr. Bourchier left the house in a cab for the terminus.

When on the third day after he had left the little suburban house Lord Redmond returned thither, with a heart eager for his wife's embrace, the landlady met him with the news of Aricia's departure with the stranger who had been the agent of the girl's original appearance there.

(To be Concluded in our Next.)



[A FRIEND IN NEED.]

UNDER A LOVE CHARM; OR, A SECRET WRONG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"
"The Mystery of His Love; or, Who
Married Them?" &c., &c.

CHAPTER XV.

HORACE'S FEAR.

She saw her own fair face
Looking at her in the moonlit water.
Now may Heaven send her grace,
She is but the miller's daughter,
And her love was false who sought her.

HORACE RODNEY prided himself on his coolness, his quite superb composure. It was strange then how this fearful, furious shrieking affected him. Could it be that even beneath the hideous fungus growth of selfishness which disfigured his nature there lay hidden a something that could feel a little still and fear?—a human heart which condemned him, told him that he was a rascal, and led him to expect punishment?

Whose was that voice which made the green pleasure grounds of that noble house fearful, had thoughts too black to be put into words, lurked for days like hidden murderers in the young man's brain? Had he told himself that if Margaret and her child were dead it would be a good thing for him? Had he wished them dead? Had he any plan in his young and picturesque head by means of which, if well carried out, the bitter accusing tongue of the wronged girl might be put to silence for ever in the grave? Was that her death cry or the voice of her avenger?

It was wonderful to see the rapidity with which he closed and barred the inside shutters of the wide window while the howls outside grew louder, and then came the sound of scampering feet, and all voices died away, first into faint moanings, next into utter silence.

Athelstane had lighted the gas lamp, for the gas was laid on at Wolvermoor. A strange desire was on him to see the face of his brother; he had wild thoughts, all more or less connected with the daughter of the gamekeeper. Strange that the voice sounded so like hers. Great heaven! had some paid assassin stabbed her to the heart? Were those her death cries? The sounds were too fearful to admit of any mild interpretation.

As for the face of Horace, it was livid with a deadly fear. He rushed to the brandy, poured a quantity into the green Venetian glass, and drank it off at a draught.

"I shall be steadier now," he said. "I have been ill. Which way did they run? What has happened?"

"Heaven alone knows," Athelstane answered, solemnly. "Listen! The household are astir; the visitors—the young ladies and our cousins—will be frightened to death. Let us go out and inquire."

But Horace held him back.

"Stop, just a moment; I feel so ill—so——"

He shuddered and shook from head to foot, and lay on his face on the silken couch in an attitude of the deepest despair. Athelstane darted at him a look of mingled horror, pity and contempt, and then rushed out of the room, up the corridor and into the hall, where he met a group of frightened servants, his cousin Eva, and some of the visitors.

"What is the matter? What has happened?" he heard everybody asking everybody else; but nobody seemed to know anything except that some fearful cries had been heard and a desperate struggle seemed to have taken place among the thick trees on the west lawn.

Two or three of the servants had seen two people running—apparently a man and a woman

—and the woman was dressed in white. Then Athelstane thought of poor desperate Margaret; she had worn a cotton dress with white ground which would have looked quite white by moonlight.

"A most fearful noise," said Lord Melrose.

The nobleman walked out of the oak sitting-room. He carried a lamp in his hand.

"Lady Melrose has fallen into one of her most distressing faints," continued his lordship. "She was so alarmed at the noise. Her maids and Clemence are with her; but unfortunately Doctor Finucan is gone to Marston; he rode on there after the hunt to see about some books from Mudie's, and my wife is prostrate."

"Let me go to her," cried Eva.

"No, many thanks. Lady Melrose suffers in an indescribable way if a stranger enters her room when she is ill, that is why the poor dear children are so tied, and indeed, Celia, you must come and try what use you can be of. It is not fair to leave all to Clemmy."

Celia walked away sobbing with her father, and mounted the magnificent front staircase of Wolvermoor. The servants went out into the grounds to search, and Athelstane went with them. A hideous thought was in his mind, and do what he would this nightmare fancy pursued him like a phantom.

Horace had wronged Margaret Bainston; he had wrecked and ruined her life, and she was desperate, for he would not even give her money to buy food for her child. Driven wild by misery she had threatened to disgrace him in his uncle's sight. He fearing and dreading that, what had he done? Had he made an appointment with her in the wood at the end of the lawn? and had he sent some stealthy ruffian to— Ah! the thought was too awful. Only why was there that ghastly pallor on the face of his twin brother when he heard those fearful cries?

"I will ride over there in the morning and inquire," he said to himself.

He went along the thickets in the park searching and shouting. At last he found him-

self in a lonely, desolate place where the leaves of the last summer lay thick and dead about his feet. Brambles and rushes grew high; just below was a sedge pool. The moon came for a moment from behind a rift in a dark cloud, and shone upon the weird and ghostly scene.

It looked like a pond where a murder might have been committed long years ago; a pond which a ghost might haunt on nights like these! And what was that! A white figure amid the trees flitting in and out, and now standing close to the pool as if meditating a desperate plunge—an antidote to all earthly sorrows, darkness, oblivion, death!

Was it Margaret? He went swiftly towards the girl, and as he approached he heard her weeping and uttering the wildest words; but strange to say they were spoken in French, but then to be sure Margaret had lived in France with old Miss Singleton.

"My darling! my love! my adored one!" said the girl, "I am coming to you—to you, and my little one into your grave. I am—"

In another moment Athelstane would have laid his hand on the girl's shoulder, when he felt himself seized suddenly and pinioned from behind. The attack was so sudden that he had no time to strike out, for it really seemed as if the person who held him was possessed of more than human strength. He was pulled backwards, and a pungent drug was forced to his nostrils. Another moment and he lay senseless among the thick trees by the side of the desolate pond.

Who that has come up from that deep unconsciousness which is akin to death does not remember the drowsy, half-unwillingness with which he opened his eyes once more upon the busy, restless world? Athelstane heard voices which seemed to him to be a long way off at the end of a long dark corridor, he meanwhile lying in a dreamy trance, painless and even fascinating in a kind of way impossible to describe.

Anon he saw lights approaching, and the sound of the voices grew nearer, nearer, yet more near. Presently they were quite close, and then he heard these words spoken distinctly in a voice that he knew:

"He opens his eyes. He will do now. Make a litter of the boughs and we will carry him to the house. He must not exert himself."

Athelstane recognised the voice of Doctor Finucan. He then felt a thrilling sensation in all his veins; his blood began to circulate; the mists cleared from his brain; he opened his eyes. There was Parker, Sir Robert's confidential servant, kneeling by his side chafing his hands with both his own, and looking at him with pitiful, honest eyes. There was Doctor Finucan, grave and anxious, with his fingers and thumb professionally pressed on the wrist of the young man. Several servants were moving about quickly engaged in making a litter of the boughs of the trees. Athelstane tried to speak, and after one or two efforts succeeded.

"What has happened?" he said.

"You have been stunned, or else drugged with chloroform!" the doctor said. "I think you have been drugged. I—"

"Yes," Athelstane interrupted, eagerly, "that is true. I now remember it distinctly. I saw a woman about to drown herself in that pool. I believe there has been a murder here!"

The shadow of a smile flitted over the grave face of the man of science.

"One of the hallucinations produced by the drug, my dear young sir," he said, kindly, and then added, "I am afraid it will turn out to be a very vulgar and commonplace attack devoid of any elements of romance, for Parker tells me your gold watch and guard are gone!"

Athelstane passed his hand over his eyes and tried to remember distinctly how the thing had occurred. Presently the man came and lifted him on to a rudely but firmly constructed litter. When they lifted him and began to carry him towards the house, the fresh current of the

keen night air revived him, and the distinct recollection of the scene by the pond, the figure of the girl in the white dress, the strange, wild voice in which she spoke and addressed her "beloved one and her babe," and said that she was "coming to share their grave"—the distinct recollection of this all came back to him with a vividness that there was no use in attempting to explain away as "the effect of an hallucination."

Then he had felt strong hands suddenly and savagely grasping him from behind, and a sponge strongly soaked with chloroform had been pressed and held tightly to his nostrils. His struggles had been useless; the drug was stronger than he, and Parker said he had lost his watch, an antique hunting watch, in eighteen carat gold case, attached to a short, broad chain of the same metal. Watch and chain had been presents made him by Sir Robert, his uncle, in his boyhood, and he prized them much.

It is always annoying to be robbed, but added to this was the deep conviction of some secret wrong and deadly treachery that baffled curiosity and conjecture alike. If that girl were Margaret, as most likely it was, who had stood in such wild anguish of despair on the brink of the pond, did she lie at the bottom of the still waters a disfigured, swollen corpse? Whose was the hand that had prevented him from stepping forward to save her from the rashness of her own despair?

Horace! Horace! Oh, merciful heaven! was that possible—and then the robbery! Had the golden ornaments been handed over as a reward to some rascal? Horace was a young gentleman who never paid anything if he could help it—not even his just debts. It would be easy to give his infamous tool the purloined chain and watch of his own brother—hideous, horrible, unnatural thought!

They arrived at the house now, and Athelstane was carried quickly to his room, where a fire was lighted, and under the superintendence of Doctor Finucan he had a warm bath, was placed in bed, and then was given some very strong soup, after that some arrowroot, and then the doctor told him to try to sleep.

"It is the only thing to restore you, my dear fellow," said the man of science, "and if you find you cannot sleep, why then I will do the best I can for you. I will come to you at the end of an hour, and you shall talk, but if I find you asleep I shall leave you, for then I shall know that you will not awake for some hours to come. Do be patient, I entreat." He clasped his hand warmly and added: "I know you think me an interfering and eccentric and disagreeable person; but you will know some day that I have your interest at heart."

"Doctor!" cried Athelstane, in excitement, "tell me for the love of heaven what you know about this. You must know that I, for the sake of others" (he was thinking at the moment of his brother Horace as the guiltiest of men in intention if not in fact)—"for the sake of others, would not seek to have this hideous secret brought to light, but only tell me. Did she drown herself?"

"Whom?" asked the doctor, in the strangest and sharpest voice.

"I will not name her," Athelstane answered. "Something tells me that you know and suspect much, but I know that I was attacked by somebody who wished that poor soul to drown herself! I don't at all understand how you are mixed up in it," he went on, "but I feel that you know, so tell me—is she dead?"

"We are at cross purposes," the doctor answered, coldly. "I assure you, Mr. Rodney, I have not the faintest or remotest notion whom you refer to. All I can tell you is that on my return from Marston an hour ago, I found the whole household in the greatest confusion and consternation. Some one of the cottars wires on the estate—you know there are several woodcutters cottages below the plantations in the park about a mile from the house—well, one of these women had a quarrel with her husband, and I suppose she was tipsy, and she made a noise and came here towards the house

intending to— to complain to Sir Robert of her husband, and they made the most fearful disturbance and frightened poor Lady Melrose almost to death. But it seems a lot of headstrong fellows who never waited to hear reason (excuse me, I mean no offence, you were one of them, but yours is the age for rashness) rushed out thinking some innocent girl was being murdered, and then some ruffian lurking in the grounds, most likely with a view to organising a burglary, saw your chain glitter on your waistcoat, and resolved to have it; those thieves are almost always provided with stupefying drugs. Now I think I have explained enough. Don't get rash and ridiculous notions into your head; get to sleep, if you can, and banish all thoughts of the mysterious lady in white who stood by the pool. Chloroform always conjures up phantoms. Good-bye."

Athelstane was left alone. Some of this tale seemed probable enough, viewed in the light which Doctor Finucan threw upon it; but then the tone of the woman in white who had stood by the brink of the pond was not the tone of the half tipsy wife of one of the woodmen. Anyhow, it seemed altogether like a most strange and fantastical dream.

When Athelstane came to put all the pieces together of this extraordinary puzzle, few of them would fit. There were always large portions which seemed parts of another picture—a different story. Why was Horace so violently affected? How was it that the tones of the woman were so refined? Nay, was he mistaken in supposing that she had even spoken French? And Margaret, though a gamekeeper's daughter, was still a woman of refinement and culture, who had lived abroad, had read and studied much, and spoke French well.

Yes, it might be Margaret. Then the doctor insinuated that he had seen nothing but an hallucination—a phantom caused by the drug. He battled out the question until his brain grew weary, and then he sank into a deep, dreamless and refreshing sleep, which lasted till late the next morning.

Athelstane had risen, taken a cold bath, partaken of an excellent breakfast, and then he had gone towards the stables in search of a horse. His desire was to find out for himself if Margaret Bainston were alive and well; he was most horribly haunted by the idea that secret murder had been done! He hardly thought it really was so; but he was so wretched in regard to the shrieks and cries of last night, that he resolved to set the question at rest for once and all.

He had come down so late to breakfast, that all the party had dispersed. He had seen none of them, not even his cousin Eva or his brother Horace. In the yard he met Parker, who came to him eagerly, and with a very long face.

"I hope you are better, Mr. Athelstane," began the faithful little man, affectionately.

"Oh, yes, Parker, I am all right; but the mystery of the thing is enough to make one half insane. Tell me, Parker, for heaven's sake, did you ever find out who made that terrific and unearthly row at the door of my room on the first night I arrived? Was that really a tramp?"

"No, sir," said Parker, lifting his hands in dismay. "Nobody heard a sound of it. None of the servants had been near the door, so they say. I think it was a lark, sir, of that young Petworth's, the new under footman, and a hussey of a housemaid called Jane Greely, that's what he calls spoons on him," added Mr. Parker, in an accent of contempt.

Athelstane looked for a moment in amazed indignation at little Parker.

"Perhaps," he said, "those wretches played all those tricks last night."

"I should think so, sir," replied Parker, "if they had not robbed you; but I know Petworth too well. He would not steal a penny; he has been on the estate from a boy; his father is underkeeper, and Greely is a mad-cap, but no thief."

"I heard of a tipsy woodcutter's wife," began Athelstane.

Parker shook his head. "That won't do," he said; "there is an ill-behaved couple down by the side of the wood called Luff who quarrel and drink now and anon; but she was very ill last week, and is lying as meek as a lamb with a lot of old cronies attending to her, and he is as quiet as a tame cat this week, and as sober as a judge. I saw him yesterday, and asked after her. I am quite sure the Luffs were not here last night."

"And you caught nobody—saw nothing after I got away from the party in the wood last night?" continued Athelstane.

"No, sir. We missed you; but not for a long while, and then Doctor Finndan had come back, and he was in a great way, and said we must come and search for you, and he came also; and after searching for about half an hour we found you, and we thought at first you were dead, you lay so still. The doctor himself thought so. We have sent down to the police office at Marston, requesting them to put police officers on the scent, not that there's any good in that," added Parker, with contempt. "We shan't find it again. It will go to York and get melted up in some goldsmith's furnace there long before we can catch them. The receiver is as bad as the thief, say I."

"I must have a ride," said Athelstane. "Tell the fellow to saddle Spite for me."

In about ten minutes from that time Athelstane rode away on Spite's back. He was soon galloping over the park, and anon over the moors in the direction of Hazlemere Hall. The day was fine and mild for the season. Now and then the wintry sun shone out pale but brightly from a rift in the clouds. The air was soft.

"More fine hunting weather," Athelstane said to himself, and then his thoughts reverted with an odd thrill to the events of the day before.

How calmly, how gracefully, how fearlessly, how swiftly Clemence had ridden; how like a beautiful impersonation of a superb scorn she had looked. By what spell of enchantment had she contrived to make her horse take the almost impossible leap over the broken wall with the deep ditch and sloping muddy bank at the other side, and Athelstane's horse had slipped after taking the leap in scrambling up the bank. He wondered how it was that so much mortification seemed to fall to his share whenever he was in the company of the girl he loved to madness.

"She must be a witch," he said to himself, "in the middle ages the wisest believed in the power of charms and love potions and spells. I hope I am not beginning to drift into idiocy."

And he laughed aloud at the sheer absurdity of the haunting thoughts which rose up in his mind, and told him that there was something more than human about Clemence Melrose. This nineteenth century is scarcely a credulous age; it is rather an age of scientific research, of doubt, and of the passing away of old creeds holy and time-honoured.

It is the age of knowledge, fearful and wonderful, wherein the dark secrets which nature has hidden in her breast for cycles of time are brought out and made as clear as the light. It is not the age when the mind of a young, brave gentleman and scholar might be expected to be haunted with such fantastic surmises as now troubled Athelstane's.

What was this phantom of a ghostly German legend which was so busily woven in with his thoughts by his fanciful, active brain? It was a tale of a girl who had been dead long centuries, or at least, who had been buried and the funeral service read over her in some Bavarian churchyard.

She had been a count's daughter, more beautiful than the spring; she rose daily from her grave and showed herself in the haunts of men at various places, and under various excuses, and always under different names, but invariably she appeared as a transcendent beauty, and won

men's hearts and souls by a single glance of her fiery, dark eyes.

All men loved her; but she hated them with a diabolical hatred, and won their hearts only to drive them to despair or death, or to tempt them to crime. In her human life of three centuries back she had been betrayed by a certain heartless and vain knight, who, after causing her ruin, left her and her child to shame and despair, and married a rich countess.

Viva, that was the name of the unearthly heroine of this wild legend, was compelled to return to her grave to sleep every night. As long as she fulfilled this hideous contract she had the power of retaining eternal youth—a beauty which dazzled all beholders, and the power of winning the most impassioned love of every man that she met. None could resist her spell if once she cast it upon mortal.

At last she was tracked at night to her grave by someone who had watched her. While in her grave her power departed; she was not able to vanish at will and perform impossible feats, and thus she fell into the hands of the local authorities.

The legend went on to state that she was tried for all the mischief she had caused by a tribunal summoned to the spot before the daylight broke; that she was condemned, and burnt to death as a witch before the rising of the sun, and that her ashes were thrown into the sea. The law courts of that district actually now, it is said, hold the legal documents which narrate the trial of the witch and her cruel execution.

"Now, why in the name of the weird and the wonderful, do I think of the lovely German witch Viva when I look into those glorious eyes of Clemence Melrose? It must be that I am an idiot."

Just as Athelstane had mentally paid himself that compliment the miserable dwelling of the gamekeeper Bainston came into sight with its three broken stone steps leading to the battered door; its roof grown over with moss and lichens; its one window stuffed with rags. The door was open and Athelstane heard the sound of voices.

He paused a moment in a species of half fascinated horror. A woman's voice was raised in loud and piteous weeping; he heard, mingled with it, the wail of an infant, and above all a voice tender and melodious as the murmur of the summer wave when it breaks on the golden sands at morning tide. It was the voice of Clemence!

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ANGEL.

For who would bear
The whips and scorns of the time,
The proud man's contumely;
The pangs of despised love,
And all the ills which patient merit
Of the unworthy takes? SHAKESPEARE.

"Don't cry, Margaret; you shall never blush for what has happened, if I can prevent it. I will get you an excellent situation abroad—not a dull, melancholy one where you will be surrounded with old maids and gloomy associations—with nothing to prevent your mind from reverting to the past. No; you shall go as companion and assistant to a lady who keeps a large lively pension or boarding-house close to the Mediterranean. She wants a young and pleasant lady-like woman, who will be able to converse with the ladies and gentlemen in French and English. She will pay you sixty guineas a year, and provide you with every home comfort. As for your poor little weakly child, leave him to my care. I will see that he has a good wet nurse. He had better remain near to his grandparents, somewhere in Yarrow village. Now, I told you I had no money yesterday, but last night I sent my confidential maid, Bertha, to Marston to sell a heavy emerald bracelet and a diamond ring and gold chain. She brought me back twenty-five pounds, which I now give to you to do with as you like. I also sold a heavy necklet of gold, with locket, for which, as they are made in a most fashionable pattern,

I received eight pounds. This sum, Mrs. Bainston, I give to you to buy a few comforts for your poor little children. I have a handsome allowance; but I have hitherto squandered it. Henceforth I will devote at least thirty pounds a year to Mr. and Mrs. Bainston's use, but don't thank me. Look upwards and thank the good Father of all who sent me as his messenger to do his bidding in helping the poor and the afflicted."

Then it seemed to Athelstane that there was a chorus of women's voices raised in thankfulness, first to Heaven, and then to this angel on earth, whom it had sent to administer the divinest charity to the distressed.

Athelstane could not deny himself the sight of his beautiful ladylove. Good heavens! and because she was so beautiful and so mocking, for no other reasons, he had actually been likening her to Viva, the witch who was burned for her enchantments and the evil which she worked with her love spells a century ago.

He sprang from his horse; threw his bridle over a post, and then walked boldly into Bainston's cottage. Margaret stood against the whitewashed wall, her face was averted, she was weeping. The gamekeeper's wife, a woman worn, haggard, and aged before her time, though with a child at her breast, knelt, actually knelt, at the feet of the young beauty in an attitude almost of worship, so it seemed. She was, in truth, overcome with her grateful feelings, and there she knelt in her thin, sorry garments with her little half-starved, half-clad children round her, and her eldest daughter, who had been first her pride and next her shame—her eldest daughter, whose poor wailing babe lay in an old basket cradle at her feet, was about to be provided for comfortably; and all through the divine compassionateness of this most beautiful young lady; Bainston, the keeper, a large-limbed, black-haired man with a rough, kind, simple face stood against the door of the back room leaning backwards, and folding his arms, an incredulous smile on his lips, a great pleased wonder in his eyes. Yes, Clemence Melrose was the good angel of this poor family.

Athelstane looked at her and said to himself that only his man's selfishness and wounded vanity had ever made him think her anything save angelic. Clemence wore her dark green riding habit, with her silver collar. She had borrowed a horse and ridden off, accompanied then only by a groom, or was it possible, without any escort at all?

"Miss Melrose," said Athelstane, bowing deeply to the generous and compassionate lady of his heart, "I came here to inquire about Margaret Bainston. Something made me anxious about her. I am delighted to find that she is so far well. Seeing your door open, Mrs. Bainston," he added, taking off his hat, and addressing courteously the keeper's wife, "I ventured to come in uninvited. I ask your pardon for this."

"Oh, sir, it is too much all this goodness; it's more than we deserve; and as for Mr. Horace, your brother, sir, if you are Mr. Athelstane Rodney, as I see you are, why I can answer for it, Margaret won't attempt to annoy him now that this young lady has been so good to her," continued the poor, down-trodden, humble creature, beginning to sob and cry afresh; "and we won't say nothing to Sir Robert as can set him against your brother, only when he does come into his fortune, I hope he won't quite forget to provide for her."

"Speak for yourself, mother!" cried Margaret. "Lady, you are as good and charitable as you are beautiful, but all your kindness—nay, all the kindness, all the money in the world, cannot console me for my broken heart and wrecked life. Horace Rodney spoke words to me yesterday which I will never, never, never forgive, so help me, heaven! I will find means to plant a thorn in his false heart when he least expects it. As for this lady's kindness, nobody can feel more grateful to her than I do, and I will work and repay her this money she has given. Yes, and I will bless her name night and morning as long as I live, but I will

be avenged in one way or another on Horace Rodney. I swear it!"

"You know to whom we are told that we should leave vengeance, my poor Margaret," said Clemence, sweetly. "And now Mrs. and Mr. Bainston and you, Margaret, adieu for the present. I shall see you again, Margaret, before you start for Mentone. I shall write to Madame D'Albe to-night."

She shook hands with all the Bainstons, and then walked out of the cottage, accompanied by the delighted Athelstane.

"Tell me," he said, very eagerly, when once they were alone outside the cottage, "where is your horse, and did you ride here with no other escort but a groom?"

"With no escort save myself," she answered, with a little odd laugh. "Myself and my brilliant wits and lively thoughts for companions. Cheer up; do not look distressed. I met with neither robbers nor wild horses, nor wild cattle, though, now I think of it, I had a fright as I passed by the farm I think they call Owen's Croft. A black bull, savage enough to have figured in a Madrid bull fight, came tearing towards the open gate of the farmyard, and if he had got out, my poor favourite would certainly have taken fright and run away with me. She pricked up her ears as if she were afraid, but I saw a small and dirty boy in the road whom I entreated to rush to the gate and close it, which he did just in time before the creature had time to hurt him. I dropped the child a half-crown in payment, and came on here. There is my horse browsing under those fir trees."

"If she should take it into her head not to let you mount," Athelstane began.

The merry and daring beauty only answered with a light laugh. Gathering her skirt in her hand she darted forward. Athelstane followed.

"Don't touch me," she said, imperiously, "I hate being helped into the saddle. I can put my foot in the stirrup and get up with ease; I like it so much."

"At least let me hold her head?"

Athelstane ran forward as he spoke, and held the creature's head. In a moment Clemence was erect in the saddle.

"Thank you," she said. "Now I think I will wish you good-morning and ride on, I am rather in a hurry to return to Wolvermoor. I have a special appointment with your brother Horace."

This most provoking girl suited the action to the word. She put her horse to its utmost speed, and darted across the moorland at a flying gallop before poor Athelstane could reach first his horse, which was tethered at some little distance, and next his saddle.

"What a tormentress she is," he said to himself, wrathfully. "Now I should manifest common sense, I suppose, if I took my lady at her word and let her ride on alone, while I might ride on to see my friends at the Homond (a neighbouring country seat); but no, I will follow her up. She might meet with the fellow who attacked me last night."

Athelstane rode on in mad haste trying to overtake that wild rider, Clemence. Positively the young lady and her horse only looked now a moving speck on the moorland. Athelstane felt almost now as if his life depended in coming up with Clemence. He dashed on, on, on, but still she was before him.

At length she was only a few yards ahead, then she looked round and laughed her peculiar laugh. At that moment a wild horror seized Athelstane, for he remembered with an awful thrill that there was a deserted and most dangerous coal-pit only about a couple of moving yards in front of Miss Melrose. He strove to shout to her, and it seemed that a lump rose in his throat. He called out hoarsely:

"Stop! stop! for the love of heaven. There is a coal shaft. It is death! death, Clemence! do you hear?"

He was close behind her now, and she had heard his words. She then turned round towards him a face wild with terror.

"I can't stop her!" she shrieked; "she's running away with me!"

(To be Continued.)

THE HISTORY OF A KISS.

A SMILING babe, in quiet rest,
With red cheeks dimpled deep,
Lay safely rocked on its mother's breast,
In childhood's sinless sleep.
While the mother's eyes were filled with love,
And a deep and tranquil bliss,
As she prayed for her girl to the throne above,
And gave it a mother's kiss.

A charming maiden, with eyes of blue,
And sunlit waves of hair,
Looked up to a lover tried and true,
As his manly form stood there;
And he murmured words of longing love—
Nor, satisfied with this—
His arms encircled the nestling dove,
And he pressed on her lips a kiss.

An aged dame, with silvered hair,
With wrinkled and furrowed face,
Graved deep on its features the lines of care
That poverty's pencils trace,
Leaned once again on a trembling form,
And he kissed her through falling tears:
As they turned them out in the driving storm,
From the home of happier years.

There lies in a coffin an aged face
Reposing in dreamless rest,
And the smile that hallowed the baby's grace
On its pallid features pressed;
While the aged man—grief-worn and weak—
With lips that try to pray,
Prints one last kiss on the furrowed cheek,
And wearily walks away. I. E. J.

EVERYDAY LIFE.

A MAN'S character is betrayed by the merest trifles in the course of his daily life. It is curious to observe how differently different people do the same things. Take the operation of shaking hands. One might expect a thing of that sort to be done by everybody in the same style. Instead of which, one man grasps your hand sternly, as in a vice; another gives it a soft pressure; another seems to mistake it for the handle of the village pump; another lays in your palm a lifeless hand, that feels like a bundle of cold sausages. Observe the difference, also, in the management of the hat. Intended for the same purpose, how differently it is used! One man claps his on his head like the lid of a spring box; another adjusts it cautiously with both hands, as if it were made of glass, and must be handled with care.

Equally different are the methods of wearing the hat. One man wears it on his back hair; another covers his eyebrows with it; another wears his cocked over one eye, to suggest that he is a "knowing" one, which he generally is, in the sense of knowing some things which it is a part of true knowledge not to know. There is equal difference in salutation. One man takes off his hat with a flourish, as if he were giving it an airing; another contents himself with a

commercial dab at the brim. So again, with the salutation of the eyes. One has a furtive expression and cannot encounter your eye. Another looks earnestly at you, as if seeking fellowship and sympathy. Another gorgonises you with a stony stare. By all such slight tokens does a man reveal his true character, whether good or bad.—Ed.]

BLANK DAYS.

To the man who gains his livelihood by reporting events, uneventful days are doubly trying. And yet there are many dry, listless, indifferent days, when nothing succeeds in failing and nothing fails of success. Days, when no one will drown themselves, accidentally or purposely, when fire keeps out of mischief, when children won't be run over and machinery ceases its war of mutilation against human flesh. Days when lightning sheathes its sword, when even the elements are quiet.

"Once we thought," says a reporter, "we had a news incident, furnished by an indiscreet pigeon, and to a reporter even a pigeon is looked upon with interest. We have always had a fascination to have a pigeon run over by a cab, and to-day we thought the hour of gratification had come. The pigeon was squatted in the road, and paid no attention to the advancing cab and the cab went squarely over it. Ha! ha! a run over pigeon at last, and one felt like cutting a pigeon's wing right there on the spot. But where's the pigeon's remains? Nowhere to be seen; but look yonder. There is the pigeon, as sure as we are alive, flying out from under the cab, alive and well, and acting as if nothing had happened; after all the pigeon was all right—nothing had happened.—Ed.]

CAT OWNERS.

THE other morning as two ladies were preparing their toilet, an accident of perhaps a serious nature occurred. The elder lady was sitting with a large cat at her feet. Suddenly without warning, the animal seized one of the legs of the lady and tore the flesh with its teeth and claws. Before the young lady her daughter could come to her assistance, the wounds inflicted by the cat were many and painful. The young lady took hold of the enraged beast and pulled it quickly away. The cat, infuriated to tigerish anger, then sprang at her, its tail swollen as large a human arm, and scratched her, besides badly tearing her dress. A neighbouring gentleman was appealed to for help, and by the aid of the young lady's tight grip on the cat's neck and a dumb-bell in the hands of the gentleman, the furious creature was killed. A physician was called to dress the wounds of the elder lady, who is afflicted with erysipelas in the lacerated limb, and whose safety is a matter of anxiety.

A BALANCED ACCOUNT.

A WIDOWER, who had iced water rather than warm blood in his veins, was engaged to a widow, but his affection was so languid that he was in no haste to marry her. A friend from a neighbouring town happening to pay him a visit and to meet the charming widow, fell in love with her, and avowed his willingness to marry her on the spot. The widower offered to sell out his rights, privileges and appurtenances for the sum of half a sovereign in hand paid. His susceptible friend closed the bargain without hesitation. The money was paid, and formal notice of the change of title was given to the widow. She assented to the basis of exchange, was married to the second lord, went to his house and was apparently happy.

Meanwhile, the widower was moping. So long

as the widow was close at hand the development of his affection had been slow enough, but when she left the town and he could never see her any more, his love for her grew and swelled and bulged out like an egg-plant in bloom. His blood became first tepid, then steaming, and finally it boiled. He went to the village where his charmer was cooking griddle-cakes for his friend. He hung about the house, he made love to her, he eloped with her. The injured man had lost his purchase money and his wife, but he did not take it amiss. His affection, once so tropical in its rank luxuriance, had withered during the honey-moon. He is willing to call the account "square." He does not ask to have the money returned.

THE LOST RING.

HAD I been my own mistress I should never have served Marie Rosis. But poverty, the need of food and raiment, the hungry mouths that must be filled, were too strong for me, and I engaged myself to her. True, she asked no reference; but why need she?

"You are poor, Louise," she said, with a slight French accent. "Money is of no account to me—I only ask you to be faithful. I said that I should travel; so you must supply your brother's and sister's wants before we go. I shall be liberal with you. Take this."

As she spoke, she reached out six or eight half-eagles. I drew back my hand.

"It is too much," I said.

"Allow me to be the judge of that. I know what will be required of you."

A little chill ran over me. What would be required of me? I looked up to see, if possible, what meaning lay hidden beneath her words.

"I shall travel as fancy pleases," she continued. "One spot is as pleasant to me as another. I go in search of something which I have lost. It may be here, it may be there. I have nothing to guide me in my search. It is all blind chance."

At first I was not happy in my migratory life. I used to long for home—or what had been home—and for the caresses of those I loved. But this did not last long. Marie Rosis soon grew to be the world to me, and I her bond slave.

Sometimes we rested for two or three weeks from our travels, and then went forward, day after day and week after week, without stopping. I do not know how long I had been with her, when I discovered that we were not travelling alone—that we had a follower, who pursued us from place to place with unwavering persistence. He did not seem to be conscious of us. He never addressed us—he only followed us like a shadow. I do not know why I did not speak of him to madame, nor why she did not mention him to me. I used to think sometimes that she did not see him. And yet, why not? Her eyes were too sharp to allow anything to escape them. Perhaps she was afraid that she might alarm me by speaking. We were two women journeying alone, with no one to protect us, and I was naturally timid. Still, about this man, with his gentle mouth and clear blue eyes, there was little to alarm any woman. Ordinary people, Madame Marie did not notice; and this gentleman's presence was not marked. So I tried to think no more about him.

It was after this stranger came that I learned what madame was searching for. A ring that had mysteriously disappeared from her finger one night while she was sleeping. A strange ring with a garnet heart for its centre, all that she had left of Monsieur Rosis. I glanced at her in surprise.

"Was it your wedding ring?"

"Better than that—Monsieur Rosis gave it to me while he was dying. He came back to life to give it to me—just as we turn back when we have forgotten something."

I looked at her keenly. Was the woman crazy?

"He gave it to me, and said a blight would follow me if I lost it. I did not lose it—it went away from me; but I am not happy. Monsieur Rosis was very hard."

"But you are not to blame for what you could not help."

"Ah! but if a lover took it?" she said, shaking her head slowly. "I had fallen asleep in the drawing-room—the day was warm. When I awoke monsieur's heart was gone, and the air full of shadows. I've been searching ever since for it."

She began pacing up and down the room. We were stopping for a week at a hotel in a large inland town. This conversation had been carried on in the parlour, a long, wide room, looking westward. As madame walked, I thought I had never seen her half so beautiful. She wore a dress of some soft black stuff, which trailed on the bright-hued carpet. This was relieved by a gauzy scarlet mantle, as delicate and filmy as the wing of a butterfly. While she went to and fro restlessly the stranger came noiselessly in and walked beside her. She did not notice him, but looked straight out of the window to the green trees and beyond them to the wide sunset.

For myself I grew angry and heated at the stranger's boldness. If he had anything to say to her why did he not speak? What right had he to dog her steps so persistently? At least I would tell madame. As I started forward to speak the strange gentleman raised his hand to his forehead and I saw something on it that glowed blood red in the sunlight. I looked at it eagerly and saw the shape of a heart outlined on the slender finger. My heart bounded. Here was the lover who had stolen madame's ring. It should be restored to her, and once more she should know happiness. Ah, how frightened I got, though! While my lips were parted to speak, and my hand reached forth to touch his arm, he was gone, and I stood quite alone with Madame Rosis.

"What makes you so white?" she asked, stopping short in her walk.

"Why, he has gone?"

"Who has gone?"

"The gentleman who walked beside you."

"Indeed, who so honoured me?" she said, incredulously. "I was busy with my thoughts."

"A strange gentleman walked with you—near you—and as I started towards him he disappeared."

Madame laughed a low, musical laugh, but I saw that the white hand that clasped her scarlet mantle over her heart was shaking. Her lips grew white and dry.

"I hope he was handsome."

"Very; with a mouth like a girl's."

Her forehead grew puckered into scowls.

"And what else?"

"He wore a ring with a blood red heart!"

I pray that I may never on earth see a face so fearful as was madame's at that moment. I put up a quick prayer, for I thought she was about to kill me. She clutched both hands about my arm and held me closely to her.

"How dare you, girl?"

"I could not help seeing him," I said. "There he is now outside, looking in at the window."

She cowered down at my feet, and covered her eyes with her mantle. I do not know how long I stood there, or how long she knelt without moving. I know the figure stood motionless at the window, looking at us with steady, unwavering eyes. Would he never go? Would he hold us for ever with that quiet, unflinching gaze?

At that moment I shrieked, and madame sprang to her feet. A crowd came to see us, and I fell back fainting.

In the morning we started. It was summer time, and our way led through the richest of earth's gardens. All was beautiful from the sky downwards—birds, flowers, fruit, and velvety greensward. In spite of everything I was happy.

"We will soon have a long rest," madame said,

as we whirled along. You shall hear from the brother and sister at home."

I was looking out of the window as she spoke. As I turned my face towards her I felt someone touch my shoulder. I turned around quickly. The stranger was sitting near us in the train.

His presence seemed so real to me that I spoke out angrily:

"If you please, sir—"

Madame looked around.

"To whom are you speaking, Louise?"

I knew then, that whatever I saw, whether man or evil one, Madame Rosis was conscious of nothing. I looked over the face—at the blue eyes and gentle mouth, down at the white hands and red ring, without a word.

"Monsieur Rosis," I thought. "But why does he follow madame?"

We rode the day through with the fair, immovable figure beside us, and the doctor in the next carriage. The one seemed to counteract the influence of the other. Nothing could harm me.

At night we came to our resting place.

"Here we shall find the ring!" said madame, as we hurried out of the train. "It is like an inspiration. I feel it through and through."

We did not go to a hotel, but to a house near the outskirts of the town. I know the coachman of the fly stared at madame when she told him where to drive us. The night was very dark. Looking round for my friend, I could not see him, and I thought that I was lost.

Warm as was the night, the place to which we went was chilly. Madame had fires made in the grates and ordered wine to be brought.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"Pardon me for not saying. This is my home. No one dare intrude here."

No one? Was madame so sure? As she spoke the pleasant-faced stranger, ghost or man, came noiselessly in, and sat down by the fire. He wore the same expression as when I had first seen him. Glancing at his hand, I saw the blood red ring glowing upon his finger.

"You do not drink," madame said, as I sat holding the wineglass. What is it?"

I put down the glass with a shudder.

"Madame Rosis, I want to go home."

"This is your home. By day it is beautiful. To-night I know there are shadows—and it is cold. We can have more fire."

"That is not it—I want my sister. I seem to be stifling here."

"Well, well, I will play to you. I will sing."

She threw open the piano. Good heavens, what a wail came from it as her delicate fingers ran up and down the keys! Wild, unrest, agony, despair found voice in the melody which she awakened. Then her little hands pattered softly, softly down, and her voice broke out softly to the weird accompaniment. Through it all I could hear the falling of ghostly feet; the whispers from shadowy lips. The stranger listened at her side; so close was his face to hers, that in the unsteady light they seemed to mingle and waver together.

Where was I? The atmosphere was like that of a tomb! Was I among flesh-and-blood realities, or had I been drawn into the charnel-house to expiate some sin which I had committed? Sin, indeed! what did I know of sin?

"Don't madame—don't!" I cried. "You are driving me mad! Let me go, in the name of mercy, let me go!"

"You need rest," spoke madame. "You are nervous. You shall go to your room and have supper there."

She led me like a child. What could I do?

Upstairs it was more cheerful. The fire was fresh and the lamps gave out a clear, steady light. I drew a sigh of relief.

"You like it?" said madame.

"How can I help it?"

"I am glad. My room is opposite. In the night if you are wakeful, you can come to me. But I think you will sleep. I will send your supper up in a moment."

I did not wait for supper. Thoroughly ex-

hausted bodily and mentally, I sank upon the bed. I do not know how long I slept. I started up suddenly from my pillow, a fearful shriek echoing through my brain. It was madame's voice that aroused me. In a moment there was a sound of hurried feet in the hall, a murmur of strange voices, and someone threw open the door opposite mine. I stole softly out, and crossed the hall to madame's room. There was a group of strange people standing by her bedside.

A voice said, "She is dead!"

"What is it—what killed her?" I asked.

"I do not know. Probably her heart was diseased. Some sudden fright did it. The detectives have been on her track for weeks."

"The detectives? Why?"

"She poisoned Monsieur Rosis, her husband. That is his portrait yonder," said the physician.

I gave one glance towards it. I had little need to look at it, since the face was so terribly familiar to me.

"She has escaped justice," someone said, solemnly.

"You are mistaken, she has gone to meet it."

"See!" cried another, in a startled voice, "she wore his ring again."

I looked down at the little waxen hand, now clay cold. On the white forefinger the heart of Monsieur Rosis glowed and burned. It was plain to me, no matter what others thought. Madame had died of fright when the ring was placed upon her finger.

Her impression had been true. She had that night found her ring. Let us hope, too, that in God's wide mercy she found rest.—H. E.

THE HOME SECRETARY ON THE PEW SYSTEM.

MR. CROSS, the Home Secretary, when laying the stone of a church at Widnes, recently, said the National Church, leaving all religious bodies to do their own work, was bound to provide accommodation for all, so that everyone might attend her services. The Church of England belonged to the people, but the iniquitous pew system, against which he had ever waged war, had driven the poor away from the parish churches. This system was, however, rapidly dying out. New churches, of which that was one, were free and open, and he hoped the clergyman to be appointed would, like St. Ambrose, to whom the church was dedicated, openly speak the truth and rebuke vice.

THE FUNERAL OF CHAKA'S MOTHER.

THE horrors that attended the funeral of the mother of Ushaka, or Chaka, the first great chief of the Zulus, show in an exaggerated form the universal idea that the spirits of departed relatives are pleased by things done in their honour by their living descendants; and that they will be more pleased the greater the thing is that is given up:—"When told that his mother was dead, he and his principal chiefs put on their war apparel, and went to the hut in which the body lay. He stood silent for some time in a mournful attitude, with his head bowed upon his shield. At length his feelings seemed to become ungovernable, and he broke out into frantic yells.

The assembled people sympathised with their chief by filling the air with loud lamentations. During the day great numbers of natives from the surrounding country came to the place of weeping, and joined in the terrible outcry. By noon of the next day, it is said that not less than 60,000 persons, male and female, had assembled, hundreds of whom were lying on the ground faint from excessive fatigue and want of nourishment, for none had dared to cease from their lamentations, or to refresh

themselves with food or water. Soon after mid-day the whole assembly formed a circle, with Chaka in their centre, and sang a war-song, at the close of which he ordered several men to be executed on the spot, when the cries of woe became more violent than ever. Then, as if bent on convincing their chief of the reality of the grief, the people began an indiscriminate massacre amongst themselves, many of them receiving the blow of death while inflicting it on others. Those who were found near the river, panting for water, were beaten to death by men and women, who were mad with excitement. Seven thousand people, it is said, perished on this occasion.

On the second day after her death, the body of Chaka's mother was placed in a large grave near the spot where she had died, and ten of the handsomest girls in the neighbourhood were buried alive in the same grave. Twelve thousand men, all fully armed, attended this horrible funeral, and were stationed as a guard over the grave for a whole year. But extravagant as these rites were, they were not thought to be sufficient, and regiments of soldiers were sent through the country for the purpose of putting to death all those who had not been present at the funeral, and several thousands more were thus killed. Then it was decreed that the earth should not be cultivated for a whole year, and that the milk of all the cattle should be poured out on to the ground; but at end of three months, in consideration of receiving a present of much cattle from the chiefs and great men, the king annulled this decree, which really condemned the people to a state of starvation. Lastly, it was ordered that if during the year of mourning children should be born, both parents and children should be put to death. This order was enforced with cruel stringency, and led to the deaths of many persons.

When the year of mourning had expired, the people, in obedience to the king's mandate, assembled in great numbers at the royal kraal, and 100,000 oxen were brought together to grace the crowning ceremony, their bellowing being thought to be peculiarly acceptable to the dead. Standing in the midst of these herds, Chaka began to weep aloud, and the lamentations at once became general. This manifestation of sorrow was continued till sunset, when a great number of cattle were sacrificed. Next morning, the people being marshalled in military order, the king took his place in the centre of the kraal. Every man who possessed cattle had brought at least one calf, and each man cut open the side of a calf and tore out the gall bladder. Regiment after regiment then marched before the king, and every man as he passed sprinkled him with gall. After this he submitted himself to certain religious ablutions, and with these proceedings he was released from his state of mourning.

CLARA LORRAINE;

—OR—

THE LUCKY TOKEN.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FROM his very soul Mr. Wardlaw pitied the man whom he had thus struck down, but the cause for which he fought demanded the merciless blow.

It was long before the betrayed husband looked up, and when he did so, his countenance had the look of a suffering old man.

"My house is indeed falling into ruins around me!" he cried, lifting up his trembling hands as if to avert a tangible calamity. "Truly, iniquity brings its own punishment. Covetous, purse-proud and haughty I have been, and my children have followed in my footsteps,

Ambitious and cruel I have been, and my wife emulates my foul example. Woe, woe, to the house supported by such unrighteous hands!"

He bowed his face for a moment upon the table before which he sat, and Mr. Wardlaw, looking down upon him, almost forgot in his commiseration the long years of successful crime, the privations, the obloquy, he had heaped upon the innocent and the woe which his example had been to society. Before he could find voice for the pity which filled his heart, the stricken man raised his head.

"There is no further need of threats or bribes," he said. "When a man's own wife drags his name and that of his children through the mire, it is useless for him to seek to hold the favour of men. My own misdeeds are black, but my wife's infamy is blacker."

He reached out his hand, and with unsteady fingers took pen and paper from the table.

"All you demand, and more, I will concede," he continued, after a slight pause, during which he seemed to be striving to collect his shattered nerves.

Then he commenced writing. His pen at first moved slowly as if his stiffened fingers could hardly guide it, but after awhile it swept the page rapidly, the writer's blood seeming to circulate more freely in his veins as he went on, and when, at its close, he signed his name in a bold, free hand, he looked up and said:

"I have done the only noble act of my life. You will now have no need to resort to bold measures."

Mr. Wardlaw ran his eye over the paper. It was a full avowal of wrong-doing, of covetous longings, of base schemes, of ignoble measures, and lastly, of criminal acts.

It was the confession of a forger; of one who had rifled an only brother of all he possessed, and then turned him adrift to die in penury. The paper put Clara Lorraine in full possession of all the wealth which had been unjustly held by her uncle, and begged of her charity a pitiful allowance for his disgraced wife and innocent children.

"This is indeed a full and satisfactory acknowledgment," said Mr. Wardlaw, as he folded the paper and put it in his pocket.

Mr. Lorraine arose and stood before the fire with a far-away gaze. He seemed steepled and strengthened by the act of justice which he had been forced to make, but when his visitor bade him good-day he scarcely noticed his withdrawal. Yet ere Mr. Wardlaw reached the door he called after him, and when the latter turned he pointed shudderingly to the letter lying upon the table.

"Take that away!" he said, pointing towards it, yet averting his face from the shameful sheet.

Mr. Wardlaw obeyed. He lifted it from the table as if he were himself reluctant to touch it, and carrying it to the fire, let it fall among the glowing coals. Long after he had been left alone, Alfred Lorraine stood gazing like a man half dazed at that blackened bit of curling, quivering paper. It seemed like a shrivelled soul, and perhaps some thought of that emblem was in the mind of the disgraced man as he watched it.

"Verily, the way of transgressors is hard!" he murmured.

He looked about him upon the rich appointments of the room, but every article of luxury and pride seemed to sear his eyeballs. In no direction could he turn his gaze without meeting something which assumed the air of a stern, mute accuser. Where was now the pride, the haughty bearing, the bold self-confidence which once had awed his inferiors and chilled his equals?

The bold heart was abased, the hard will broken, the pride humbled in the very dust. Life had turned to gall and wormwood. Every breath was an inhalation of misery and an exhalation of anguish, and at last, with a cry, he fell forward, murmuring:

"My punishment is greater than I can bear!"

An hour or two thereafter he was found by one of the servants still lying prostrate upon

the floor with his head beside the fender. They raised him up and bore him to a sofa, and as they did so a pool of blood was noticed on the spot where his head had lain. With loud cries Mrs. Lorraine was summoned to the room, but it was with a cold glance that she gazed upon the dead husband of her youth.

"Let a physician be called," she commanded. "Send instantly for Dr. Esseltyne."

The medical man came, but he could do no good. The blow which in falling had been inflicted upon the head was pronounced sufficient to cause death, but an after examination showed that some violent agitation had ruptured a vessel of the heart. When this intelligence was conveyed to Mrs. Lorraine she demanded to know if her husband had received visitors just previous to his death.

"Yes, madame," the servant replied. "I wished to excuse my master, but the gentleman would see him."

"Who was the gentleman?"

"It was Mr. Wardlaw."

Mrs. Lorraine asked no further questions and dismissed the man, but for a long time afterwards she sat silent and brooding.

In her heart she knew what had transpired. She knew that it was the knowledge of her perfidy which had caused her husband's death, and with white cheeks and glassy eyes she inwardly confessed herself a murderess. She knew that her frantic appeal to Wardlaw had been despised; she knew that henceforth in the eyes of the only man whose favour she cared to secure she was an outcast, a pariah, whose touch would be contamination, and the thought galled her and tore her heart as if with the fangs of a beast of prey.

It was while she sat thus grimly facing her real self that Cécile, unbidden, presented herself. The maid had a malicious smile upon her face as she said:

"Madame, they do say that M^{rs}. Clara will soon come back, and that she will be the mistress here."

Mrs. Lorraine started up, and her old spirit flashed in her eyes as she bade the girl retire.

"Yes, madame, I will go immediately. I shall prepare to leave madame for ever, but before I go I wish to know what madame will give to Cécile for never telling and the secrets of madame that Cécile knew?"

Mrs. Lorraine was in no mood for bargaining with a perfidious servant. She sprang from her chair and made a motion as if she would have angrily flown at the girl, and the cowardly creature beat a hasty retreat.

Some hint of the girl's words had once before that day reached Mrs. Lorraine's ears, but she had steadily refused to credit it. To her sordid mind it was easier to believe that her husband was dead of a crushed spirit than that she would be shorn of all the luxuries to which she had become accustomed as to a second nature.

And inwardly she cried out in anguish at the thought that all her vanished magnificence should pass into the possession of the hated and induced Clara.

Had all her schemes and plottings come to this? Had she managed so miserably that she might be brought to poverty, that one daughter might contract a base alliance, that another might go forth to seek her own livelihood, and that her husband might die a disgraced man?

Mrs. Lorraine thought of all her butterfly acquaintances, not one of whom had come to her in her affliction with soothing words of comfort and aid. Only Mrs. Grahame, for whose sake a daughter had been sacrificed, left a card at the door, and Mrs. Lorraine, catching a glimpse of the fashionable lady's face as she drove away, knew that the last rite of her gay, worldly life had been celebrated.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CLARA'S return to health was so slow that it was often thought she fluctuated between life and death. Her strength both of body and mind had been too severely taxed, and it was fre-

quently with grave doubt as to the result that Doctor Ponsonby watched beside her bed.

Youth and a good constitution at last triumphed, and when the mists of early spring gave place to the bright sunshine of settled weather of summer, the invalid was able to leave the house of her kind friend, Mrs. Morris, and seek a more suitable habitation.

But long ere this removal took place she was informed of the change which had taken place in her life while she was oblivious to all earthly affairs.

The information was imparted by degrees as her strength warranted the narration. Her grief at her uncle's death was unfeigned, for though it was entirely by his means that her life had been poisoned and those of her father and mother saddened, yet he was her nearest relative, the tie of kinship was strong, and had she been conscious of what was transpiring, it is possible she would have defeated Mr. Wardlaw's purpose by a full surrender of her rights, for thereby she thought her uncle's life might have been prolonged, not knowing that his wife's was the hand which really dealt him his death-blow.

It is well, therefore, that her tender heart had not the opportunity of so perverting her better judgment, for justice should never be blinded by human sympathies. Mercy may stretch forth her beneficent hand to temper the avenging stroke, but she should never condone the offence and let the culprit go free.

The faithful little Lina watched beside her cousin's sick bed with unflinching devotion, and in such a school her noble character grew and blossomed into glorious promise.

Her little, anxious face was the first which Clara recognised when she emerged from her long unconsciousness, and it was thenceforth chiefly from Lina's hand that she received the remedies which at length insured her recovery.

Lina's sorrow over the death of her father was as stormy as her nature was passionate and intense, for her father was the only one of the household who seemed to bear any love toward the child.

She begged to be permitted to remain with her cousin, so instead of returning to her mother she lingered at Mrs. Morris's house, an arrangement to which Mrs. Lorraine gladly agreed, for the care of a child she felt would be an additional trial to which she was not equal.

Clara sent her aunt many kind and conciliatory messages, to none of which did the latter reply. A haughty resentment filled her heart, and she determined that no stress of circumstances should compel her to again come in contact with her hated relative.

Mrs. Lorraine was not a woman to calmly submit to what seemed to her like a usurpation of her rights. When informed, therefore, that her husband's fortune was to be relinquished to its rightful owner, she sought legal advice, and by every means in her power sought to secure some hold upon it.

It was then that her husband's wrong-doing was at first delicately hinted at, and then openly explained to her; and the faithless wife, instead of bewailing and concealing the disgrace, if she could, rose boldly up and openly anathematised the memory of the wretched man whose life had been linked to her own.

But why longer detail the passionate deeds of one who had unsexed herself by pride, arrogance and self-indulgence? Why lay open a heart where evil continually ranked, and where there was no soil for the finer instincts of woman to find root.

Compelled to abandon the luxurious mansion which had been her home for so long, she sought a retreat in a less fashionable quarter of the city, where she was supported by liberal donations from the purse of her youngest daughter.

To this spot, after a few months, came her eldest child, abandoned and abused by her worthless husband, taunted with her penniless state, and thrown ruthlessly back upon her friends.

Lina was not suffered to leave the home of

her cousin—a home where Clara Lorraine was a happy wife and Robert Earnshaw an adoring husband.

The stately Lorraine mansion—the home of Clara's parents ere it had been that of her uncle—was prepared for the reception of Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw when they were ready to occupy it, and so completely was it transformed by tasteful fittings that it awoke no unpleasant associations in the minds of either bride or groom.

Dr. Ponsonby and Lina danced at the wedding festivities, and the little girl, bearing in mind his laughing speech, glanced towards his nose, now and then, to make sure that his spectacles were safely moored in their place.

One chamber in Mrs. Earnshaw's house was turned into a sort of sanctuary, into which only two members of the family ever set foot. It was the attic chamber in the fourth story.

This Lina restored to the same condition it was in upon the day of Clara's flight. The little black trunk was reclaimed; the paintings and sketches were returned to the walls, and every little tasteful token restored to its accustomed place.

The key of this sanctuary was closely guarded by Lina herself, and whenever the waves of her stormy temper rose high and got beyond her control, as was sometimes the case with a nature so strong and impulsive as hers, she would fly to this refuge, whither Clara would soon follow, and in the old relation of teacher and pupil the wrinkles would be smoothed out of the troubled young brow by the hand of affection, the ruffled spirit would be calmed by the voice of counsel, and words of heavenly wisdom would be dropped with blessed effect into the limpid depths of an immortal soul.

Mr. Wardlaw shared the happiness which he had helped to confer upon his young friends. He had a chair of his own at both table and hearth, and when he beheld the married pair, graduated, as he termed it, from his care, he turned his attention to the winning Lina, whom by alternate petting and advising he did his best to spoil.

Yet he often found his match in the bright-eyed, sharp-witted girl, for the old mischievous spirit would at such times flash up, until her guardian, as she called him, would wonder if she were woman, child or sprite.

She amply repaid the care and kindness of her friends, for her bright presence in their home was a daily delight, and when in after years she went forth to a home of her own, her ears and heart were often besieged by younger cousins who came to her for help in their little troubles and counsel in their maturer perplexities.

It may not be uninteresting to add that in Robert Earnshaw's study there hangs over the fireplace a little blue horse-shoe delicately painted and quaintly inscribed. He cherishes it as one of the most valuable of his possessions, for it was rescued from its unhallowed goal by his friend Mr. Wardlaw, and the story connected with its embellishment and true destination was gleaned from his wife's loving lips.

[THE END.]

THE winner of the first prize of 200,000 florins in the Austrian "Communal Lotteries," is said to be Baron Hirsch, of Paris, described as an unhappy man; who has to make both ends meet on a pittance of sixty million florins, or four and a-half million sterling.

THE personality of the late part proprietor of the "Daily Telegraph" will be sworn under a million. But this represents only a portion of his vast estate. Lionel Lawson was one of a family of ten, among whom the father impartially distributed a fortune of £100,000. Lionel was a well-dressed, light-hearted man of the world, whose chief pride was to be taken for a Parisian. He was permitted to know the Prince of Wales personally, and H.R.H., who likes to be amused, was pleased to laugh at many of his stories.



[THE REVELATION.]

DANGEROUS GROUND;

OR,

HAPPINESS ALMOST LOST.

CHAPTER I.

"Oh, Hortense, only think. Minnie Morris, that plain, dark, little creature whom we used to ridicule so shamefully because of her patched dresses, awkward manners and abstracted moods, now appears in the character of a gifted authoress, and the writer of that beautiful poem 'Among the Angels,' which we all admired so much, and which the principal complimented so highly. And to think that we never stopped to think 'what genius slumbered there,' but treated her just the same as though she were of the common herd, making ourselves just as odious and disagreeable to her as ever we could. And one of our schoolmates is a renowned authoress. I believe that reflects glory on us, though, so I have at least found some consolation in the thought that we have played tag round the same corner as this illustrious personage, as well as had the privilege of ridiculing her. Oh! girls, girls! Why wasn't I born gifted instead of beautiful?"

And the speaker, a decidedly plain, but surprisingly merry elf of seventeen, made a grimace at the reflection of her own face in an

opposite mirror, and let fall the morning paper whose contents had given rise to her half comical, half-serious speech, in which real concern was almost concealed by her surprise at this unlooked-for intelligence, and her usual inclination to treat this, as most other matters, however serious, as a good joke.

The group of school-girls gathered in Number Thirteen had each ceased her occupation to listen to Belle Merton's tirade, and now they turned to their queenly favourite, to whom Belle had at first appealed, anxious to hear her opinion on the subject before presuming to offer one of their own.

Hortense Grantleigh tossed her handsome, haughty head contemptuously, while the morning sunlight pouring through the latticed window, wove off her golden hair a coronet over the white brow, which, in the admiring eyes of her friends, was far more beautiful than the laurel crown of the most gifted poet.

Yes, Hortense Grantleigh, beautiful, proud, imperious and condescendingly kind to them at times, could win the admiration, the fear, and the obedience to her every whim, of her schoolmates, but she could not win their love; and although with an iron will she maintained her place as acknowledged favourite among the girls, any one of whom would have been glad to have been her confidential friend, she compelled them to admire at a distance, and checked all advances towards intimacy, almost towards familiarity.

"Oh, pshaw, girls. Where's the use of wast-

ing so much sentiment, making so much ado over the mere ability of weaving one's thoughts into rhyme, or putting one's ideas on paper, with the certainty of being petted and flattered all for the necessary exertion of earning one's daily bread? I'd as soon think of calling on one of the labourers who had just come to the conclusion that he must either work or starve, as of leaving cards at Minnie Morris's. If the public would only reject small attempts at authorship, instead of encouraging them, the papers for which we subscribe, with the belief that we are going to be enlightened and cheered by reading the productions of authors and poets, instead of the flights of fancy in which a sentimental school-girl indulges and has the audacity to commit to paper and send to the press, would not be so flooded with such trash and nonsense that it sickens one of literature to read them! Why, anyone with any brains or mind can write such stories and poems as publishers accept now-a-days!"

An angry retort trembled on Belle Merton's lips, a red spot glowed on either cheek, and she was about to break out into a spirited defence of the absent authoress, who, to do her justice, Belle had always liked, and only ridiculed because of her irrepressible love of fun, never dreaming of the pain it might give Minnie Morris's tender, sensitive nature. But suddenly remembering, or rather anticipating, the disapproval with which such a course would be met by the other girls, she forced herself to speak calmly.

"So you are in favour of rejecting all attempts made by the people of the present day, unless by those who have already achieved success in the literary world, and have won a right to the titles of authors and poets. When such fortunate people are no more, pray what are the coming generations to do? Are they to feed their hungry minds altogether upon the literature that has regaled their forefathers and mothers for ages, with not a single one of the foolish fancies in which sentimental school-girls indulge to season it? I think that Minnie has done well. By the way, Hortense, you have both brains and mind. Why do you not take your rightful place in the literary world?"

No one had ever dared talk to Hortense Grantleigh in that manner before, and the seeming audacity of Belle Merton was past her comprehension. She attempted to freeze the young lady forthwith with one glance from her angry blue eyes, but the calm brown ones of Belle met hers unflinchingly. Then she answered with chilling dignity:

"What the coming generations do concerns me not in the least. I live in and for the present."

"And yourself," supplemented saucy Belle.

Miss Grantleigh did not deign to notice the interruption, but continued:

"And as to writing for the press, perhaps," with an assumption of superiority over her listeners, "I shall one day avail myself of the gifts which nature has bestowed upon me and become a poetess. As to such presumption as yours, Miss Merton—"

"Ting-a-ling! Ting-a-ling!" sounded the school bell, and "Miss Merton" was obliged to lose the benefit of Miss Grantleigh's opinion of her "presumption," and perhaps it was as well, for Hortense was becoming decidedly warmed up with her subject, and no one knows what the consequences would have been.

Hortense Grantleigh was the spoiled and petted darling of her widowed father, the rich old Captain Grantleigh of Margate, and at the age of seventeen had been sent to the S— Academy in London to complete her education, and from which she was soon to graduate. A brilliant future afterward awaited her.

She was to return to her beautiful home as the wealthiest heiress and most accomplished young lady of her county, make her first entrance into the best circle of society the place afforded, and after a summer and winter had passed was to spend a year or two abroad. Well might her companions and schoolmates envy the wilful beauty her favoured existence.

Belle Merton, whose father, a poor coal dealer, was barely able to supply her with the necessary means for gaining an education, was fitting herself for a teacher; but merry Belle, with her lively imaginative disposition, so impatient of all restraint, and her inordinate love of fun, was poorly adapted to the flinty road her young feet had been destined, from childhood, to tread so unwillingly, yet ever cheerfully.

Minnie Morris, the young girl whose genius had made such a stir among her former school-mates, had just graduated, at the age of seventeen, from the academy, thus far outstripping her less ambitious and industrious classmates, who had spared no means of annoying the sensitive girl from the time of her entrance, and only for the cause before stated by the wickedly mischievous Belle.

She had lived, since her earliest remembrance, on the extreme outskirts of the city, with the woman she called mother; but strange stories were afloat since her name appeared in the list of contributors to the S— Magazine, concerning her real relation to widow Morris; report saying that the woman's husband had died many years before, leaving her childless.

She had left the city alone, to go no one knew whither, and had at length put in an appearance at S— with a child, which she declared to be her daughter, but which many hinted darkly had been stolen from its parents somewhere or sometime during the time which had elapsed ere she had arrived in S—. As to the truth or authenticity of such reports, Mother Grundy herself could not vouch. So there the matter rested, no one deeming it worth the trouble of sifting to the bottom as yet.

The girl had struggled long and earnestly for an education, and now, having obtained as good a one as Hortense Grantleigh even could boast months hence, though of course lacking the pretty little superfluities which unbounded money and care had added to that young lady, she was making the best use of her genius with its aid.

She now gave up the pursuit which had before supported them, that of teaching an evening school for children, and sewing for those who would furnish her with work to do in odd moments, and devoted herself to her favourite and dearly loved labour, and taking care of her mother, who was prostrated by an incurable malady, and whose health was rapidly failing; indeed, the tender loving heart of the gentle girl was often wrung by the thought that that mother's long-tried spirit would wing its way "over the river" all too soon, leaving her to battle with the world alone in her weakness and sorrow.

CHAPTER II.

It was at the close of a beautiful day in May some three months after the conversation with which my story opens took place, that the same group of merry school-girls were gathered in Number Thirteen, discussing the grand exhibition with which the term was wont to close. Hortense Grantleigh was just expressing, in her spirited, wilful way, her opinion of the principal's choice of dramas to be enacted on the occasion, when a rap sounded on the door, causing all eyes to turn in that direction. Belle Merton, in whose room they were assembled, arose at once and opened the door to Biddy, the Irish chambermaid.

"If yeess please, Miss Belle," said the girl, in her broad Hibernian brogue, thrusting her head into the room and running her sharp eyes over the faces of the occupants, "here's a letter for Miss Hortense Grantleigh, and I wouldn't interrupt your consultation here together, only the little boy what brought the note won't budge an inch from the hall till he gets an answer from the young lady herself; and ye see I don't want his dirty feet on the flure, for I've just washed it."

With a merry laugh Belle passed the letter on to Hortense, who received it without a word,

while the others were "dying" of curiosity, and swept coolly out of the room. Once in her own, she seated herself and broke the seal, reading as follows:

"MISS HORTENSE GRANTLEIGH,—

"Knowing that my end is near, and fearing to die with such a weight on my conscience, I beg you for the love of heaven, to come to me and hear my confession.

"MRS. MORRIS."

Hortense, now thoroughly curious, read it over again, wondering what Minnie Morris's dying mother could have to say to her. Suddenly she threw the letter upon the table with an impatient gesture.

"I suppose the woman wants to consign her enterprising daughter to my friendly care, I am such a dear friend of the latter," she said, contemptuously. "But I suppose I must go and receive the charge."

And donning a coquettish hat and fleecy-white shawl, she trailed her rich dress over the long stairs and descended to where a small, tow-headed boy waited to receive her.

"Lead the way to Mrs. Morris's, as I am not acquainted with that vicinity," she said shortly.

The boy walked on before her without a word; she followed, holding her dress carefully from the gathering dew. After what seemed to her impatient spirit an age, they arrived at the door of the little tumble-down cottage, and the boy left her to enter alone.

She hesitated but a moment, then knocked loudly and peremptorily. The sound of soft footsteps was heard within, then the door opened to disclose the pale, tear-wet face of Minnie Morris. She threw it wide open to admit her visitor, and Hortense entered.

"Oh, Hortense, I thought you would never come," said Minnie, in a trembling, unsteady voice.

Even here, in the very presence of death, Hortense Grantleigh did not forget her ideas of the respect she deemed due herself from the "lower class," and said, haughtily:

"Miss Grantleigh, if you please."

Minnie bit her lip and led the way to the bed in the corner, upon which lay the attenuated form of the dying woman. Hortense seated herself in the chair which Minnie drew forward to the bedside, and gazed with curious, inquiring eyes upon the pale, wan face, over which the death-shadow was already hovering, while the haughty air with which she held her head erect gave place, in spite of herself, to an expression of fear and awe which settled over her own whitening features.

All conventionality and affectation, all distinction which she had made between herself and these people, were, for the moment, swept aside; her womanhood asserted itself, and only as a sympathising friend, and not with the condescending air of a queen bestowing a favour upon her subjects, which the foolish girl had at first assumed, did she stoop and take the cold hand of the dying woman in her warm, live grasp.

"What would you tell me, Mrs. Morris?" she inquired kindly.

The dying woman turned her head until her large, mournful eyes rested full upon the speaker's handsome, haughty face.

"Hortense Grantleigh, I have a confession to make, which, although you and yours are implicated, does not so intimately concern you as it does my little Minnie."

And here her eyes wandered with loving tenderness to where Minnie sat sobbing so piteously.

"Oh, it wrings my heart to say, but the time has come when it must be said," resumed the woman wearily. "I must talk fast, for my breath is short. I need not enter into details, but I will begin at the beginning. I never had any children of my own, and when John died my heart so yearned for the love of some human being that I removed to a country village where I was not known and determined to adopt a child and rear it as my very own. I commenced

working at my trade, that of millinery, and looking about in quest of a child to my liking, when Providence favoured me, and one was thrown in my way most unexpectedly; but right gladly did I take the little one to my heart, and give it more than a mother's love.

"One evening, just before closing my shop, I noticed a man, with a beautiful little child in his arms, reeling along the street as though intoxicated. My heart bled for the innocent baby, but I dared do nothing for it. Suddenly the man staggered heavily against my door, while the little one set up a low, wailing cry. Terribly frightened, I cried out myself, thus attracting the man's attention, and he begged me to open the door and admit him for the sake of his child. Then I saw that he had not been drinking, but was ill, hardly able to stand; and filled with pity for both, and without stopping for second thought, I threw the door wide open and admitted him. He begged me to allow them to stay there over night, and he would pay me liberally. I knew by the man's face that he was honest and in trouble, so I bade him welcome without questioning him for references, and did my best for him and the little girl. In the morning he left the child with me, saying he would come again for it in one month, and leaving a large sum of money, and a letter for his brother, in case he never returned.

"I bound myself by all sorts of solemn promises to take good care of her, and he gave me his own name and his brother's address, and then taking a sorrowful leave of his little one, he tore himself away. I waited a month, becoming more and more attached to the merry, winsome elf consigned to my care, and dreading much the time of our separation, until when the month was up, and her father did not make his appearance, the thought came to me that I need never part with her. But I was afraid, and my great love for her made me blind to the sin I committed—the wrong I was doing her in thus depriving her of the wealth and privileges I knew belonged to her, and selfishly keeping her to drag out a life of poverty with me; and so, with a guilty conscience but with the assurance of always having my darling with me, I removed to S—, where I passed her off as my own daughter, and even she herself never knew to the contrary until I confessed to her yesterday."

Here the woman paused, out of breath, her face white and ghastly, her lips pale and trembling.

"Well, what is that to me?" demanded Hortense, whose self-possession and habitual haughtiness of manner had now returned.

"Do not interrupt me; I am coming to that now," she answered, with a long drawn breath. "I afterwards ascertained, no matter how, that the man was fleeing from punishment for a crime of which he was not guilty; that the shock of the news of his arrest had caused the death of his invalid wife, and that he had fled the country with his child, hoping to escape; but finding this impossible, burdened as he was, he had left her with me, resumed his journey, established the proofs of his innocence, and was returning for his little daughter, when he was drowned in the river. Know now, proud girl, that that man was your own father's brother, Richard Grantleigh, and that she whom you have known as Minnie Morris, whom you have scorned and ill-treated, is your cousin and rightful owner of more than half the vast property you thought yours alone!"

Hortense Grantleigh's face turned livid while her features worked convulsively. She caught the dying woman's arm in a fierce grasp, and glared at her with her angry eyes, while she hissed out:

"Woman, you have lied to me! Not one word of your story is true! It is all a base falsehood by which you hoped to gain for your own child the inheritance that rightfully belongs to me! Own her for a relation!" with a glance of withering contempt at the weeping Minnie. "Never, never! Where are your proofs? you have none."

"Have I not?" gasped the woman. "Proofs that shall wrest from you every shilling that by

right belongs to her! The letter that her father left in my care is already far on its way, enclosed in another in which I have confessed all; so if you will not own her, your father, who is just and upright, if his daughter is not, certainly will."

With one cry Hortense Grantleigh flung the hand of the woman from her and dashed out of the house. In the long walk home she had ample time to think over Mrs. Morris's confession, and in her heart she knew and believed it to be the truth; that the mystery of Richard Grantleigh's child was at last solved; but still she determined to do all in her power to prevent her cousin from coming into possession of the vast estates of her father, left him by her uncle.

She had a faint, shadowy remembrance, strengthened by hearing her parents talk, of the handsome, fearless Uncle Dick who used to pet and tease her by turns in her babyhood, and of his wife, pretty, gentle little Auntie Hortense, after whom she had been named, and of the wee, wee baby, who knew nothing more than to cry and demand the entire attention of its happy young parents; and then they had gone far away—passed almost entirely from her baby thoughts and recollections; but now this strange story brought it all back to her, and she thought it over, going home through the damp fields in the darkness.

She could not have been more than two years old, when her aunt and uncle had removed to Plymouth with their baby, Hortense, for, she reasoned, "Minnie, or Hortense, as she should be called, for by that name she was christened, is now sixteen, and I shall be eighteen in two weeks."

It was as Mrs. Morris had said: Richard Grantleigh had been accused of a certain crime, been arrested; the news had caused the death of his wife, then a confirmed invalid, and he had escaped from prison and fled northward with his child in quest of certain proofs required to clear his name from suspicion.

He had visited her father's house on his return with the said proofs, but departed immediately to reclaim his child, whom he declared to have left in the care of a kindly woman in London. It was then his intention to return again with the little Hortense, and place her with his brother in Plymouth, to be brought up as her sister, while he, a broken-hearted man, would go to India, for an indefinite period.

Captain Grantleigh and his wife had gladly accepted the trust, laid extravagant plans for the future of the two girls, and waited impatiently for the appearance of their brother and little niece, when they received the sad news of the former's death.

Then every effort had been made to discover Richard Grantleigh's child, but, not knowing the name or address of the woman in whose care she had been placed, such efforts were fruitless; and, after years of unavailing search, the vast property of which he was seemingly the only heir had been appropriated by Captain Grantleigh. Hortense remembered all this, and recalled it to mind as she walked along, and made a vow never to allow Minnie Morris to "rob her of her rights."

CHAPTER III.

THE funeral was over, and in the village churchyard a white slab above a new-made grave bore the epitaph of Mary Morris; while poor, heart-sick little Minnie sat in the cheerless, tumble-down cottage, sobbing as if her heart would break, with no one to comfort her in her desolation. True, several kindly people had offered the little poetess a home with them until a future course for her should be planned, and old Mr. Warner had offered to adopt her; but she had gently though firmly refused them all, resolved to live alone in the little house which Mary Morris had left her until news should come of her unknown uncle, and she should know if he intended to treat her kindly and establish her identity, thus restoring to her her heritage.

But if he should disown her, her gentle nature shrank from taking any legal measures, and she resolved to pursue her occupation and trouble him no more, should such a thing occur. She had been opposed at first to taking any steps in the matter, well knowing the doubts and difficulties which she should meet, beside possessing too proud and independent a spirit to voluntarily claim part of the immense fortune of haughty Hortense Grantleigh. But Mrs. Morris was determined, and so had dispatched her letter, together with the proofs of his niece's identity, to Captain Grantleigh; and now Minnie was impatiently waiting the issue in the midst of her grief for her foster-mother.

Suddenly, as Minnie arose and bathed her tear-wet face, the same, peremptory knock was heard upon the door that had sounded there once before. Minnie started nervously as she recognised who her visitor was, and called out "Come in!" in her clear, girlish voice. The door opened, admitting a stream of mellow sunset light and the queenly form of Hortense Grantleigh. Minnie drew her little figure up to its fullest height, with an equally queenly grace, and motioned Hortense to a seat.

"Minnie Morris," began Hortense, after gazing fixedly and impudently at the girl's pale face and sable robes for a full minute, "I feel myself disgraced and brought below my station in being compelled to own you as a relative, which I can never believe you really are, and I have therefore come to make a compromise with you. I will settle a life annuity of a hundred pounds upon you if you will relinquish your unrightful claim upon me and mine."

Minnie stood for a moment regarding her cousin with her clear, steady gaze.

"Hortense Grantleigh," she cried. "You deem yourself disgraced by owning relationship with one who is at least honourable. How, then, ought I to feel, who stand here and witness the baseness and duplicity of one I know to be my cousin, as you know it? Look at me! Does not the Grantleigh blood course through my veins as well as your own? And can money purchase my claims upon it? No. A thousand times no! I will keep on and establish my identity, my rights, my claims upon the name of Grantleigh—which I shall regard as no honour if you are a sample of its possessors—even though it takes a lifetime to do it! Your plans and scheming shall be set at naught, and my name and fortune shall be my own!"

Hortense glared at the girl for a moment, her blue eyes gleaming like coals of fire in the partial gloom.

"And this is your final decision?" she asked, curbing her passionate anger with an effort.

"It is," came from Minnie's white, set lips.

"Where are your proofs, with which so much is to be accomplished? Show me your proofs!" cried Hortense, tauntingly, but with a gleam in her eyes which boded no good to the dauntless young creature.

Minnie hastened to an old chest of drawers in a far corner, and soon returned, holding a small, square bundle in her hand.

"Here are some of the proofs of which Mrs. Morris spoke," she said, preparing to remove the wrapper. "Here is the dress I wore, and the necklace of pearls which—"

"Ah! let me see," cried Hortense.

Minnie, without a thought of the girl's purpose, came nearer and commenced unwrapping the bundle, and when, quick as thought, Hortense seized it and flew out of the door and over the darkening fields, while Minnie, with one wild, despairing cry, sank to the floor in a deathly swoon, her white face upturned, her dark eyes closed, and her hands still clutching a fragment of the wrapper of that bundle which was to have proved her identity, but which now lay at the bottom of an old well in the fields outside, buried beneath the green, stagnant water.

An hour she lay thus in that unconscious state so resembling death, while the soft night breeze stole in and ruffled the mass of rippling hair, and a whippoorwill sang a mournful dirge just outside the door, which Hortense Grant-

leigh had left open in her hasty flight. Then a light step sounded on the walk, and a white figure paused on the threshold, peering into the dense gloom of the little apartment. All was silent now, and the light rap that sounded on the door was unheeded.

"Minnie! Minnie!" called the clear voice of one who had ever been foremost in ridiculing "little plain Minnie Morris," and Belle Morton stole timidly in.

Suddenly she paused with a startled cry of terror as she encountered the still form lying prone upon the floor.

"Good heavens! what is this?" she cried, making her way to the wide fireplace, where she discovered matches and a candle upon the mantel.

In a moment more she had a light, and was bending over Minnie, pausing to gaze upon the clearly-defined, rigid features, and in silent amazement at her own stupidity, wondered how she could ever term Minnie Morris homely, even plain. For only a moment, however, did she stand thus—only long enough to overcome her terror and apprehension; then she knelt beside the unconscious form and chafed the icy hands, and with water from a table near by bathed the white face and moistened the parted lips. It was long before her efforts were rewarded, and Minnie opened her great brown eyes with a world of trouble in their depths, and turned her head with a weary sigh.

"My poor girl, let me assist you to the bed, and then you must compose yourself enough to tell me what has happened, and how I can be of service to you," said Belle, pityingly, raising the girl's slight form in her arms.

With her help Minnie was soon reclining upon the bed, propped up by pillows, and sufficiently recovered from the swoon to tell her story, for she knew that despite her wild ways and fun-loving nature Belle Morton possessed a tender heart, and was capable of being a gentle, sympathising friend when occasion demanded the laying aside of her habitual drollery and mirth-provoking tricks and moods.

So, with her hand clasped in hers, Minnie told her all, and implored her help and friendship in encountering the difficulties in her path; for now that she had incurred Hortense Grantleigh's enmity, and the only mother she had ever known slumbered beneath the greenward, she had no one to turn to in her need—was alone and friendless in the great world.

"Help you! Grant you my friendship! Why, of course I will, you poor child! And right gladly will I assist you in foiling Hortense Grantleigh's enmity," cried Belle, excitedly, her eyes flashing with indignation at the thought of the proud beauty's cruelty and inhumanity to this poor, friendless girl—her own cousin.

And then, to prove that she was willing to begin to verify her words, kind-hearted Belle, at the risk of being reproved by the principal for being absent so long without leave, arose and fastened up the house, threw more wood upon the smouldering fire, drew down the curtains, and turned the light higher, making the bare little room look as cosy as possible, at the same time announcing her intention of remaining all night with the sorrowing Minnie.

Long the two girls lay awake that night planning to circumvent the schemes of the proud, haughty cousin who, in such humiliating terms of scorn and anger, had disowned relationship with the little poetess, and talking over their course of proceedings to establish the latter's right to her name and fortune; and when at last they fell asleep in the "wee sma' hours," Belle's last words were:

"We'll wait one week, and in the meantime, if nothing turns up, I will go and plead your cause with Captain Grantleigh. So cheer up, my dear, for in another month I promise you the sunshine shall burst through this dark cloud, and I shall have the pleasure of congratulating you in the character of Miss Hortense Grantleigh, the wealthiest heiress in the county."

(To be Concluded in our Next.)

FACETIÆ

AN AMERICANADE.

Two young ladies meeting at the Elizabethan Brunnen, at Homburg.

VIRGINIA: "Well, and how many glasses have you fixed?"

PHREMY: "Five, I reckon, and I'm just about to fix my sixth."

VIRGINIA: "My! I calculate you must be pretty crowded."

PHREMY: "Well, yes, I am that; and I rather guess when I've fixed the sixth I shall just stop all over." —Judy.

WOOLGATHERING FAR NORTH.

OLD SCOTCH LADY (buying a plaid): "Oo?"

SHOPMAN: "Ai, oo."

O. S. L.: "A, oo?"

S.: "Ay, a oo."

O. S. L.: "A ae oo?"

S.: "O, ai ae oo."

(Here our reporter left hastily.) —Judy.

"KNOT A DOUBT ABOUT IT."

GIRL: "We shall want a dozen eggs, a pound of salt butter, and half a Dutch cheese to-morrow, and write it down in case you forget."

HIBERNIAN TRADESMAN: "Forget, is it? Shure, haven't I a memory so long I'm obliged to tie a knot in it to carry it about wid me, be jabers." —Judy.

THE LOST KISS.

(A Michaelmas incident.)

A WARM red flush, fresh, as by Eos sent
Rose-tinted all the maiden's velvet
cheek;

His kiss, the kiss she craved, seemed imminent,
She sighed and trembled, for she could
not speak.

Her timid lips, half-seeking what they
feared,

Drew nearer for a sip of that sweet
wine,

Then started back, as they the bliss
anared,

"The brute! he did on goose and onions
dine." —Fun.

SEASONED!

LADY TOURIST: "Are the sheets well aired?"

IRISH CHAMBERMAID: "Troth, and they are, ma'an; for the sneyson is three months begun, and they've been well used since!" —Punch.

ÆSTHETIC PRIDE.

FOND MOTHER: "You live too much alone, Algernon!"

YOUNG GENIUS (poet, painter, sculptor, &c.): "Tis better so, mother! Besides, I only care for the society of my equals, and—a—such being the case—a my circle is necessarily rather limited."

F. M.: "But surely the society of your superiors—"

Y. G.: "My what, mother? My superiors! Where are they!" —Punch.

ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

CUSTOMER: "And when, pray, were these birds killed?"

GAME-DEALER: "Killed, sir, why this mornin', of course."

CUSTOMER (with a suggestive sniff): "Oh, this morning—eh? Well, it's a good job they were shot—it was high time!"

—Funny Folks.

REALISM.

(Sample of dialogue from new play, "Colney Hatch," à la Zola.)

FIRST PATIENT: "Don't touch me, sir, I'm the Dook of Wellington."

SECOND P.: "Yah! You were the Emperor of China yesterday."

F. P.: "Ah, yes; but that was by my first wife!" —Funny Folks.

ON HIS METTLE.

SOMEONE has been calculating that there is iron enough in the blood of forty-two men to make a ploughshare. And there is "steal" enough in the blood of one man, as we know without calculation, to make a burglar.

—Fun.

HE DOESN'T LOOK IT.

LITTLE BROWN: "Women's rights, indeed! A woman's greatest pleasure should be to submit herself to man, her mental and physical superior, Mrs. Brown!"

—Fun.

RIGHT YOU ARE (NOT).

GOVERNNESS: "Now, really you must pay attention. There's the treble clef—that's your right hand. Now, what is the other hand?"

LITTLE GIRL: "The wrong." —Fun.

THE GAME OF THE DAY.

BISMARCK: "Come, Andrassy, we know each other's 'form.' You and I together against the lot!"

RUSSIA (to France): "I think, madame, we might be a match for them!"

FRANCE: "Thanks! I prefer to sit out at present!"

ENGLAND (to Italy): "Nobody asks us!"

—Funny Folks.

SHE DIDN'T MEAN TO TELL.

YES, my lips to-night have spoken

Words I said I should not speak!

And I would I could recall them—

Would I had not been so weak.

Oh, that one unguarded moment!

Were it mine to live again,

All the strength of its temptation

Would appeal to me in vain.

True, my lips have only uttered

What is ever in my heart!

I am happy when beside him,

Wretched when we are apart;

Though I listen to his praises

Always longer than I should,

Yet my heart can never hear them

Half so often as it would.

And I would not, could not pain him,

Would not for the world offend,

I would have him know I like him

As a brother, as a friend;

But I meant to keep the secret

In my bosom always hid;

For I never meant to tell him

That I loved him—but I did.

J. B.

GEMS.

If the storm of adversity whistles around you, whistle as bravely yourself; perhaps the two whistles may have melody.

If you wish success in life, make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise counselor, caution your elder brother, and hope your guardian genius.

MAN wastes his mornings in anticipating his afternoons, and wastes his afternoons in regretting his mornings.

We love much more warmly by cherishing the intention of giving pleasure, than an hour afterwards when we have given it.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SPINACH (FRENCH STYLE).—Pick and well wash two painfuls of spinach. Put it into a large saucepan with about half a pint of water and two teaspoonfuls of salt. When it is sufficiently boiled, strain, and squeeze it perfectly dry. Chop it fine, and put it into a stew pan,

with two ounces butter and four tablespoonfuls of good gravy. Dredge in about a teaspoonful of flour; stir it over a sharp fire for two or three minutes. Garnish with four hard-boiled eggs, cut in quarters, and sippets of fried bread.

BEETROOT AND ONION SALAD.—Peel and cut into slices two or three medium size onions and a plateful of beetroot; season with salt, pepper, a tablespoonful of vinegar, and five tablespoonfuls of salad oil; lay the beetroot in alternate layers on the dish, and pour the mixed liquor over; then place a layer of hard-boiled eggs on the edge of the dish.

ONION SAUCE.—Parboil some onions a few minutes, mince them roughly and put them into a saucepan, with plenty of butter, a pinch of sugar and pepper and salt to taste; let them cook slowly, so that they do not take colour, and add a tablespoonful of flour. When they are quite tender pass them through a hair sieve. Dilute the onion pulp with sufficient milk to make the sauce of the desired consistency; add a tablespoonful of grated cheese, stir well, make it hot and serve.

MEAT CROQUETTES.—Take any kind of cold boiled, braised, or roasted meat; remove carefully all fat and outside parts, and mince it finely; melt a piece of butter in a saucepan, add a little flour, stir; then add a small quantity of stock and the minced meat, with some parsley, finely chopped; season with pepper, salt, and a little powdered spice; stir well, and as soon as the mixture is quite hot, remove it from the fire. Beat up and strain into a basin the yolks of one or two eggs, with the juice of half or of a whole lemon, according to the quantity of mince; put two or three tablespoonfuls of mince into the basin; mix them well with the egg and lemon, then add the whole to the rest of the mince; mix well, and turn it out on a dish. When cold, fashion it in bread-crumbs to the shape of eggs, taking care to make them all of a uniform size; then roll them in egg, and again in bread-crumbs. Let them dry a short time; then fry in plenty of hot lard, and serve with fried parsley.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ONE of the coffee palaces in the S.W. district has this announcement in the window: "Fried tripe and tea." Sir Wilfred is doing much to cultivate and refine the public taste.

THE Belgian National Exhibition to be held in 1880 is proposed to be made an international affair, and there seems little doubt that the department devoted to agricultural machinery will, at all events, be thrown open to all nations.

ONE of those persons who devote large slices of their lives to the compilation of useful facts, says,—I have now, after careful study, how necessarily painstaking will at once be seen, computed that the Queen of England's Sovereign over one continent, a hundred peninsulas, five hundred promontories, a thousand lakes, two thousand rivers, and ten thousand islands.

A WELL known actor received a letter the other day, ostensibly from a Highlander, who wrote to say that "we was" very anxious to know when the gentleman addressed was coming to Edinburgh, as "we" had got "a new jacket and trousers," and "we was" afraid they would get worn out if the actor did not come soon. There is some mystery in this upon which a drama might be founded.

AFTER economy the next cardinal virtue for a Chancellor of the Exchequer is punctuality of payment and the habit of not staving off what is justly due so as to draw upon the future. In the window of Messrs. Partridge and Cooper's shop at the corner of Chancery-lane is a letter requesting that a chromograph, price twelve shillings (one of the very cheapest), may be sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's office in Downing Street, and (example worth study and following) that a bill may accompany the article for payment on delivery. Sir Stafford Northcote sets a doubly excellent example.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

UPDINE.—Merely send your advertisement to the Editor, enclosing name and address. Matrimonial advertisements are inserted free of charge.

WALTER A.—Sebastian was a Portuguese, and a great traveller.

ROBERT W.—The wisest course would be to take your betrothed to a jeweller's and let her choose and fit on an engagement ring.

GEORGE.—You had better consult a lawyer, and take his advice as to the course to pursue to secure your rights.

Q. B.—Mrs. is an abbreviation of mistress, and is pronounced mis-sis.

READER.—As a general rule the husband should be the senior of the wife a few years. It is impossible to fix what you call a "proper proportion of the ages."

JENNIE.—Ether will generally remove all kinds of stains from silks. Apply it very carefully—a little at a time—with a clean cloth.

H. P.—Avoid all kinds of food which contains much starch or sugar, and take as much exercise as you possibly can.

NELLIE L.—The gentleman should not consistently take offence at what you seem to consider carelessness on your part. Your neglect to invite him to call again after having been out riding with him would not be sufficient cause for anger.

T. M. B. W.—A girl should use her own judgment as regards the dresses she selects for herself; if her lover expresses a decided preference for a certain style, she may, if she wishes to do so, and the style is becoming to her, adopt that style, but it is not necessary for her to ask his advice about her manner of dress.

MILICENT.—When a second person conveys kind wishes to a party the person receiving them should simply thank the bearer of the message and express their kind regards in return to the one sending theirs. There can be no rule to govern kind wishes or compliments of any kind, as they should always be regulated by the intimacy existing between the parties themselves.

X. X. X.—Flushing is not due to too much blood, but to a weakness of the circulation. You ought not to wash in warm water, and charcoal internally is not likely to cure the flushing. You should avoid violent exertion, and have general tonic treatment.

JULIA.—It would depend on the circumstances of the case. As a rule, girls should be exceedingly sparing of such favours.

LOVER.—You should reform at once, no matter what the young lady may do. Your story embodies a lesson which every young man should heed. It shows the unspeakable folly of rushing off into forbidden paths because of disappointment of any kind. If you had not "forgotten the prayers your mother taught you," but had lived in accordance with their spirit, what immediate happiness might now be yours. But it is not too late for you to regain what you have lost. The young lady will be apt to be lenient to your failings in the past if she sees that you have really reformed. You should do your best in any event, and bid an everlasting good-bye to whatever has been wrong in your past life.

OLIVER.—Stop brooding over yourself. Throw all your energies into your business. Fill up your leisure time with wholesome study and healthful exercise. It is the sheerest folly for a young man to give way to such dreary melancholy. "That way madness lies," as Shakespeare says.

S. A. H.—It might be a good plan for you to talk the matter over with the young lady's parents. Such a course would probably lead at least to a postponement of the marriage, especially as the old folks may be actually rich, notwithstanding your alarm on that point. It would seem that you cared more for the girl's money than you did for herself.

MISS BEWORTH. 225, Essex Road, Islington, London, N., desires to correspond with a young lady or gentleman on matters edifying and interesting, with a view to enlighten each other's mind upon perplexing subjects. Respondent must be well-educated, and possess a refined mind.

ALTERATION OF DAY OF PUBLICATION.

OUR READERS ARE RESPECTFULLY INFORMED THAT IN FUTURE THE
"LONDON READER" WILL BE PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY
INSTEAD OF SATURDAY.

WILLIAM, HAROLD, and WALTER, three seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. William is twenty-one, tall, dark, fond of dancing. Harold is twenty-four, tall, fair, fond of music. Walter is twenty-seven, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-five, good-looking, residing in London.

VIOLET, MAUDE, and CLARA, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen (brothers or friends preferred). Violet is nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, medium height, good-tempered, fond of music. Maude is eighteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, good-looking. Clara is seventeen, medium height, brown hair, black eyes. Respondents must be in a good position, good-looking, tall.

ANNIE G. and CLARA P., two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Annie is twenty-one, dark hair, light eyes, fond of home. Clara is twenty, dark, medium height.

TORFED, twenty-three, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty residing in Hampshire.

EMMA, ADDIE, KITTY, and ANNIE, four friends, would like to correspond with four young gentlemen. Emma is nineteen, dark hair, blue eyes, medium height, fond of home and children. Addie is eighteen, light brown hair, dark eyes, tall, fond of home and music. Kitty is eighteen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height. Annie is eighteen, dark hair, grey eyes, fond of music and dancing.

TO A LITTLE HOUSEWIFE.

Oh, little housewife, clean and spruce,
Thy use one heart divines;
A rosy apple, full of juice,
And polished till it shines!
A tidy, tripping, tender thing,
A foe to lazy litters,
A household angel tidying
Till all around thee glitters!

To see thee in thy loveliness,
So prudish and so chaste;
No speck upon the cotton dress
Girdled round thy waist;
The ankle peeping white as snow
Thy tuck'd up kirtle under,
While shining dishes, row on row,
Behind thee stare and wonder.

While round the door the millions call,
While the great markets fill,
Though public sorrow strike us all
Singing, thou workest still;
Yes, all thy care and all thy lot
Is ever sweet and willing
To keep one little household spot
As bright as a new shilling.

The crimson kitchen firelight dips
Thy cheeks until they glow;
The white flour makes thy finger tips
Like rosebuds dropped in snow,
When all thy little gentle heart
Flutters in exultation
To compass in an apple-tart
Thy noblest aspiration!

Oh, housewife, may thy modest worth
Keep ever free from wrong!
Blest be the house and bright the hearth
Thou blessed all day long!
And nightly may thy sleep be sound,
While over thee, softly, stilly,
The curtains close life leaves around
The hushed heart of the lily. H. F. H.

SHAMUS, thirty, a seaman in the Royal Navy (a Roman Catholic), would like to correspond with a young lady between twenty and twenty-five.

VIVE LA VIVE would like to correspond with a young lady residing in Liverpool.

BLACK HAT and WHITE HAT, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies residing in London. Black Hat is twenty, fair, fond of home and dancing, medium height. White Hat is twenty-two, tall, fair, fond of home and children.

CAPTAIN OF HEAD and COAL BUNKER, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Captain of Head is twenty-two, dark curly hair, hazel eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition. Coal Bunker is twenty-three, fair, blue eyes, fond of music. Respondents must be fond of home, and of loving dispositions.

MARY and EMILY, two sisters, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony. Mary is nineteen, tall, dark and eyes. Emily is eighteen, golden hair, dark blue eyes. Also **POLLIE,** their friend, eighteen, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty.

BLOSSOM and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Sailors preferred. Blossom is twenty, brown hair, dark eyes. Annie is twenty, dark hair and eyes.

MARY, twenty-one, a domestic, would like to correspond with a coachman residing near Stockport.

FRED and PERCY, two friends, wish to correspond with two young ladies about eighteen. Fred is twenty-one, light hair, blue eyes. Percy is twenty, dark curly hair, brown eyes, of a loving disposition.

STANLEY, twenty, dark eyes, domesticated, fond of home, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-one.

HENRY, twenty-five, a signalman in the Royal Navy, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

PIPE CLAY SPONGE and BUTTON BRASS, two marines, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Pipe Clay Sponge is twenty-four, fair, grey eyes, fond of home and children. Button Brass is twenty-one, tall, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, and fond of music and dancing.

LIVELY MILLY and SAUCY PATTIE, two sisters, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Milly is forty, fair, loving. Pattie is twenty-six, fair, fond of home.

HILDA and ETHEL, two friends, would like to correspond with two military men. Hilda is twenty, dark, blue eyes, of medium height, of a loving disposition, good-looking. Ethel is twenty-two, fair, dark hair and eyes, loving, fond of home. Both have a little money. Respondents must be tall, good-looking, fond of home.

SHRAPNELL SHEL, twenty-two, brown hair, blue eyes, handsome, well-educated, would like to correspond with a well-educated young lady about twenty, thoroughly domesticated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

FLY BLOCK is responded to by—Jenny, twenty-one, of a loving disposition.

HANGING BLOCK by—Poppy, nineteen, tall, dark, and good-looking.

THE BLOCK by—Taffy, nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes.

CHARLIE by—M. J. G., nineteen, medium height, fair, good-looking.

KATE by—Happy Charlie, twenty-one, fair, medium height, fond of music and dancing.

EMILY by—Aloysius, twenty-three, tall, good-looking, fair, fond of home.

SABRINA by—Laura, nineteen, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes, thoroughly domesticated, and fond of dancing.

E. A. R. by—Louise, loving, domesticated.

Z. Y. Z. by—Herman, steady, of a loving disposition, fond of music.

HARRY by—Isabel, twenty, dark, medium height, and of a loving disposition.

WILLIAM L. by—Nelly, twenty, good-looking, medium height, affectionate.

GEORGE by—Kate, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition.

HAVE GOT by—Clemence, twenty-one, medium height, dark, good-looking.

SWAN TAIL JOE by—Melrose, twenty-two, handsome, medium height, fond of home.

HARRY, GEORGE, and CHARLEY by—M. E. B., on behalf of three sisters.

ALISON by—Dynamite, twenty-two, loving, fond of children, good-looking.

FRANCE by—Wallace, twenty-six, tall, good-looking, fond of music and dancing.

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